

HOME CINEMA

HIGH-PERFORMANCE SOUND & VISION

Choice

WIN! WIN!
A £1,400
Philips
projector



'My dream room'
We check out a DIY
7.1 system, p86

New format

Blu-ray reborn!

4K discs are coming – welcome to the future...

ON TEST

Pioneer flagship AVR

LG 65in 4K TV

Epson wireless HD projector

Denon Dolby Atmos receiver

47in/48in TVs

Four Full HD Smart
sets go head-to-head

ATMOS ARRIVES

*Transformers: Age
of Extinction*
debuts Dolby's
new tech, p32



System upgrades

Christmas gifts... to buy for yourself!

- 24: DIE ANOTHER DAY
- EDGE OF TOMORROW
- FARGO: SEASON ONE
- 22 JUMP STREET
- WITHNAIL & I

INSIDE OLED RETURNS! → TWIN-SCREEN CINEMA ROOM → EE TV LAUNCH
TOP TEN GEAR GUIDE → PANASONIC ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEM → ARCAM SOUNDBAR

www.homecinemachoice.com

ISSUE 241 XMAS 2014 £4.50
AUS- \$9.99 NZ- \$12.99 CAN- \$12.99



31

9 771359 627095



EUROPEAN HI-FI
HEADPHONE
OF THE YEAR
2014-2015

oppo

PM-1
Planar Magnetic
Headphones

PM-2
Planar Magnetic
Headphones



HA-1
Headphone Amplifier



oppodigital.co.uk

HOME CINEMA Choice

www.homecinemachoice.com

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor Mark Craven
mark.craven@homecinemachoice.com
Deputy Editor Anton van Beek
anton.vanbeek@homecinemachoice.com
Art Editor John Rook

CONTRIBUTORS

Steve May, Richard Stevenson, Adrian Justins, Danny Phillips, John Archer, Tekura Maeva, Martin Dew, Martin Pipe
Photography Mike Prior, Claire Collins

ADVERTISING

Senior Advertising Executive Jo Holmes
Tel: 01689 869 919
E-mail: joanna.holmes@homecinemachoice.com
Advertising Manager Shannon Bombach
Tel: 07710 934932
E-mail: shannon.bombach@homecinemachoice.com

MARKETING AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK: New, Renewals and Enquiries
Tel: 0844 543 8200
E-mail: mytimemedia@subscription.co.uk
USA & CANADA: New, Renewals and Enquiries
(001) 866-647-9191
REST OF WORLD: New, Renewals and Enquiries
Tel: +44 (0) 1689 869 896
BACK ISSUES
Tel: 0844 848 8822
From outside UK: +44 (0) 2476 322234
Email: customer.services@myhobbystore.com
www.myhobbystore.co.uk

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Group Editor Paul Miller, paul.miller@avtechmedia.co.uk
Group Sales Manager Duncan Armstrong
Head of Design and Production Julie Miller
Chief Executive Owen Davies
Chairman Peter Harkness

Published by MyTimeMedia Ltd

Enterprise House, Enterprise Way
Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6HF
Tel: 0844 412 2262
From outside the UK: +44 (0) 1689 869 840

Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd

TEST WALL IMAGES:

©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/CUI QUNYING
©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/SIMON INGATE



Home Cinema Choice, ISSN 1359-6276, is published monthly with an additional issue in May by AVTech Media Ltd, a division of MYTIME MEDIA Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6HF, UK. The US annual subscription price is \$56BP (equivalent to approximately 108USD). Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11434. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Home Cinema Choice, Worldnet Shipping Inc, 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscription records are maintained at CDS GLOBAL Ltd, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9EF. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.



If you can't always find a copy of this magazine, help is at hand! Complete this form and hand in at your local store, they'll arrange for a copy of each issue to be reserved for you. Some stores may even be able to arrange for it to be delivered to your home. Just ask!

Subject to availability

Please reserve/deliver my copy of Home Cinema Choice on a regular basis, starting with issue:

Title _____ First name _____

Surname _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone number _____

If you don't want to miss an issue



Win a Philips Screeneo projector! p30

WELCOME

4K Blu-ray is definitely happening. Okay, it will take a while to finally appear, but it's obvious that only a full-scale alien invasion can stop Hollywood and the AV industry now. And it's great news.



I remember a decade ago the excitement that we felt knowing that HD discs were on the horizon

– then in the shape of two rival formats, HD-DVD and Blu-ray. Yet it was an excitement mixed with frustration, as delays occurred, specifications were reworked, pricing was high and customer confusion was rife. Both formats landed with not so much a bang as an apologetic clearing of the throat, before one gave up the ghost and the other slowly began to fulfil its potential.

I say this because I expect the next year to be equally fraught. 4K Blu-ray has details to finalise, studio support to be wrangled, hardware to conjure up and software slates to be decided. It may well limp over the starting line. However, it will be worth it!

Mark Craven
Editor



MENU



CONTRIBUTORS



John Archer:
The UK's most experienced TV tester cut his teeth as an early HCC staffer



Richard Stevenson:
Industry veteran and former Editor of UK CE trade journal ERT



Steve May:
HCC's former Editor-in-Chief is one of the UK's most respected AV journo



Martin Pipe:
Technical expert Martin is renowned throughout the home cinema industry



Adam Rayner:
The UK's foremost expert in extreme audio writes about bass, hi-fi and, er, cartoons



Adrian Justins:
Made his name as the editor of *What Video & TV* and *What Home Cinema*

FEATURES

In-depth interviews and special reports. Starts... p18

COVER STORY

18 10 things we want from 4K BD

With 4K Blu-ray launching next year, here's what the format needs to do to succeed

COVER STORY

24 'Dear Santa...'

Treat yourself to some Xmas upgrades

COVER STORY

32 Transforming audio

Hands-on with the first Dolby Atmos Blu-ray

36 Twin-screen living

Stealth cinema caters to every viewing need

COVER STORY

82/86 Certified: AV-Holic

Two more HCC readers share their AV setups

SELECT

The place to look if you're planning to buy some new AV gear. Starts... p109

109 Gear guide

HCC's comprehensive Top 10s list only the very best home cinema kit money can buy

BULLETIN

The place for hot products, trends and technology. Starts... p7

07 OLED returns

LG refreshes its OLED range with a 55in screen

08 Going Solo

Arcam enters the premium soundbar market

09 Barco returns home in 2.35:1

Professional cinema brand debuts domestic CinemaScope projector

10 EE joins set-top box fight

Mobile network gets ready to take on Sky and Virgin with its innovative four-tuner PVR

12 4K OLED rewrites rulebook

LG reveals why its forthcoming 4K OLED TVs will 'change the rules for display technology'

13 News x10

Featuring Sky, Amazon, Virgin and Auro-3D

14 Intergalactic thrills

Marvel smash *Guardians of the Galaxy* prepares to land on Blu-ray and DVD

REGULARS

Whether you want our opinions or your own, these are the places to look. Starts... p77

77 Digital copy

Mark Craven ponders the current state of AV

78 Film fanatic

The lack of a multi-region BD deck won't stop our movie nut importing Region-locked discs

81 The Insider

Gearing up for Awards Season in Los Angeles

88 Feedback

Share your thoughts with other AV addicts

92 Film franchise

Exploring the cinematic legacy of the X-Men

122 Point of view

Richard Stevenson courts controversy. Again.

COMPETITIONS

90 Great Blu-rays to be won!

22 *Jump Street*, *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *X-Men* Blu-rays up for grabs!

WIN!
Philips Screeneo
projector worth
£1,400 up
for grabs!
p30

SUBSCRIBE! Sign up to the world's best AV magazine and you'll save money and get some great gifts **p16**



61

'The TX-48AS640 is easily Panasonic's finest Full HD TV of 2014'

REVIEWS

With a focus on performance, these are in-depth tests you can trust... p41

42 LG 65UB980V

High-end 65in 4K/Ultra HD 3D TV combines the brand's brilliant WebOS Smarts with breathtaking imagery

46 Pioneer SC-LX88

Dolby Atmos upgrade brings even greater flexibility to Pioneer's spectacular range-topping AV receiver

50 Epson EH-TW6600W

Easy-to-set-up and well-specified mid-range Full HD 3D home cinema projector comes equipped for every eventually

54 Denon AVR-X4100W

Seven-channel receiver ready for Dolby Atmos – and with an eye on Auro-3D, too

COVER STORY

61 Group test: 47/48in TVs

A quartet of high-spec, sub-£800, Full HD flatscreens from LG, Panasonic, Philips and Samsung. Which will be crowned king?

68 LG NB5540

What happens when you pair a slender soundbar with a chunky subwoofer?

70 Panasonic SC-BTT505

Upper mid-range 5.1 home cinema system shows plenty of audio-visual ambition

72 Nero 2015 Platinum

Video editing, burning and playing software for budding Michael Bays

72 Orbitsound M10

Soundbar/subwoofer combi featuring airSOUND spatial sound technology

74 Knowhow Picture Perfect

High street calibration disc that aims to find a balance between novices and techies

74 Sony BDP-S6200

Step-down 'Sense of Quartz' Blu-ray player is a gem in more ways than one

PLAYBACK

The latest Blu-rays, DVDs and videogames reviewed and rated. Starts... p95

96 22 Jump Street

97 Mr. Peabody & Sherman: Deluxe Edition
Cold in July

Filmed in Supermarionation
Night of the Comet

98 Edge of Tomorrow 3D

100 Alien: Isolation

Middle-earth: Shadows of Mordor

Arrow: The Complete Second Season

24: Live Another Day

True Blood: The Complete Seventh Season

101 Fargo: The Complete First Season

102 Withnail and I: Limited Edition Boxset

103 The Texas Chain Saw Massacre: 40th

Anniversary Restoration

Wrong Turn 6: Last Resort

StageFright

Graduation Day

The Washing Machine

104 Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.: The Complete First Season

Mad Men: The Final Season – Part 1

The Killing Fields: 30th Anniversary Edition

La Dolce Vita

SONY

Seeing is believing

True 4K Home Cinema is
closer than you think



Experience movies in a whole new dimension with incredible, cinematic 4K detail, at home. At over four times the resolution of Full HD, see pictures come to life with sharper-than-ever colour and enhanced contrast for viewing you'd expect from the professional screen.

Get closer with our latest 4K Home Cinema projector, the VPL-VW300ES.

Find out more at pro.sony.eu/True4K

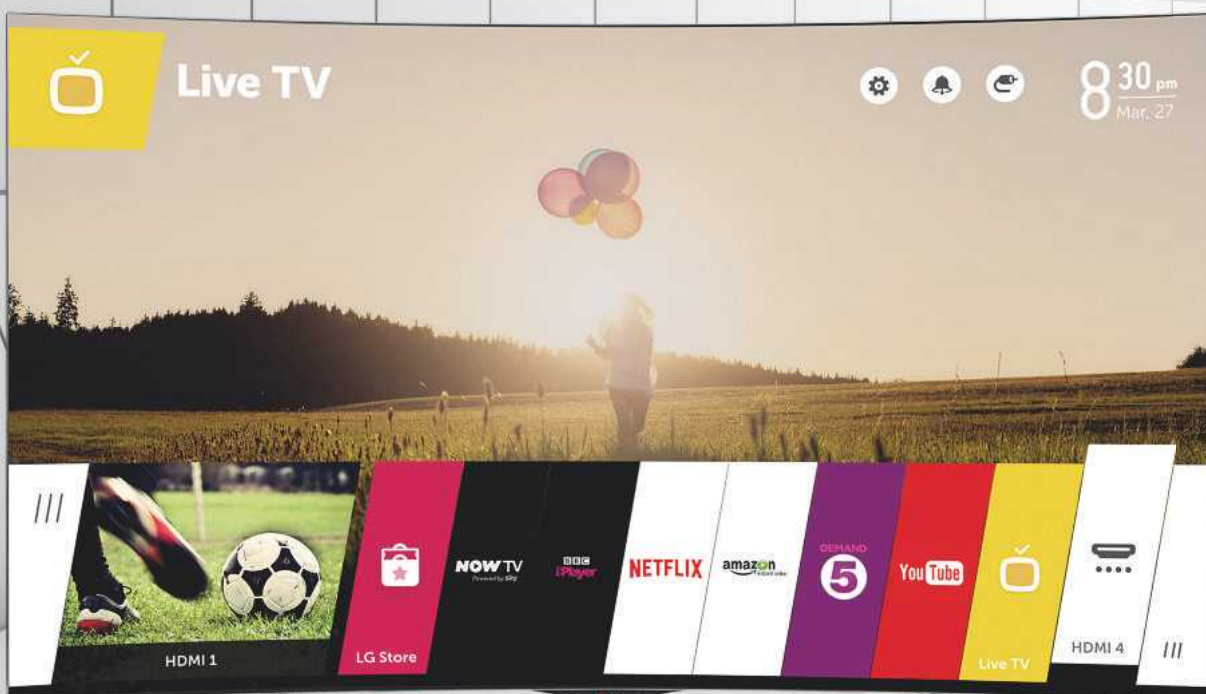
4K

BULLETIN

→ **News Highlights** **ARCAM** High-end soundbar/sub combi promises superior sonics
BARCO Cinema PJ brand targets domestic setups **EE** Mobile network unveils innovative set-top box
LG Rewriting the rulebook for display technology **NEWS X10** The hottest news stories in bite-size chunks
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY Intergalactic blockbuster comes home **AND MUCH MORE!**

OLED returns

LG 55EC930V → www.lg.com/uk



LG has refreshed its OLED stable with the new 55in EC930V, a curved model that arrives with a £3,000 price tag, whereas its predecessor – the EA980 – launched at a much more luxuriant £8,000. Again, the brand's bespoke WRGB OLED technology is employed here to deliver supreme contrast and a lightning-fast response time. Other tech tricks of this Full HD screen – no 4K here, folks – include the WebOS-powered Smart TV system, passive 3D and Magic Remote control.

HCC ONLINE...

Looking for breaking AV news, blogs, features, & reviews? For your daily fix visit us at www.homecinemachoice.com Follow us on Twitter @hccmag

Going Solo

Arcam Solo bar/sub → www.arcam.co.uk



Arcam is entering the soundbar market with its new Solo bar/sub combi. A high-end proposition aiming to deliver the kind of sonic quality normally associated with a separates system, the bar features four 4in midbass drivers and dual 1in tweeters, with microphone-assisted EQ to tailor its sound to your room. The 300W subwoofer, meanwhile, totes a 10in bass driver. Comprehensive connections include a quartet of HDMI's with 4K passthrough, plus optical, coaxial and 3.5mm inputs. Other features include onboard Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD Master Audio decoding, and aptX Bluetooth streaming that also enables connection to headphones for late-night listening. Pricing is £800 for the Solo bar, £500 for the sub.

Brighter thinking



Optoma has given its range of home cinema projectors another boost with a high-brightness Full HD model. The brand claims its new £800 HD151X has a contrast ratio of 28,000:1 and a brightness output of 2,800 Lumens. The projector features various socketry (including HDMI v1.4, DVI, USB-Power and VGA inputs, plus 12V trigger and RS-232), as well as 1.5x zoom, vertical lens shift and an integrated 30W speaker. It's also compatible with Optoma's WHD200 wireless transmission system. www.optoma.co.uk

Hi-res headphones



Audio Technica is taking aim at the growing high-resolution music market with its latest headphones. Priced around £200 and due to hit shelves in December, the ATH-MSR7s employ the brand's 45mm 'True Motion' Hi-Res Audio Drivers for, it says, improved response time and reduced distortion. Other features include memory foam ear pads, gun-metal grey, black and red finishes, various cables including a home-friendly 3m version, and a carry case. www.eu.audio-technica.com

Streaming speaker



'Hi-Fi untethered' is how high-end AV brand Bowers & Wilkins is describing its first Bluetooth speaker. Available now and priced around £300, the compact T7 marks the commercial debut of B&W's Micro Matrix honeycomb structure, and utilises a pair of 50mm drivers alongside two force-cancelling 'high-output' bass radiators to extend low frequencies. And just to show off, the company has brought in composer Mira Calix to develop a suite of unique audio cues to accompany the speaker's controls. www.bowers-wilkins.com

Barco returns home in 2.35:1

Professional cinema brand launches domestic CinemaScope projector

Barco has announced the world's first native 2.35:1 residential projector. Dubbed the Orion Cinemascope, the projector's new DLP chip (developed by Barco in partnership with Texas Instruments) supports a resolution of 2,560 x 1,080, providing CinemaScope images without the need of an anamorphic lens.

Designed exclusively for custom installation, the compact footprint Orion projector features a 78 per cent increase in pixel count for CinemaScope presentations. This hike in resolution is achieved without compromising image quality claims the company and, when an incoming source shifts from 1.78:1 to 2.35:1, the projector triggers auto-detection software to increase native resolution, expanding both width and height uniformly.

Tim Sinnaeve, managing director, Canada, but leading the charge for residential products in North America, told *HCC*: 'I used to watch most of my Blu-rays on a plasma TV, ending up with black bars top and bottom and losing a lot of the available real estate – not really an immersive movie experience.'

The Orion can also be teamed up with an ultra-short throw lens assembly, plus a glass, rigid or semi-rigid acrylic screen for a complete rear-projection system. Barco is positioning this suite of



Tim Sinnaeve: 'Combine this projector with a masking screen and every aspect ratio is presented the best it can be'

products as an effective solution for those living in high-rise or access-compromised flats. Sinnaeve continues: 'People were trying to airlift large flatscreens into their homes, so this is easier in terms of integration. I never thought this would happen, but it's like bringing back rear-projection television, customised and architecturally integrated this time, combining performance and aesthetics.'

Better than Full HD

Asked whether consumers should set their sights on a 4K version of the projector any time soon, Sinnaeve was keen to point out that there are currently no 4K DLP chips available for domestic consumption. But he considers that a minor quibble: 'Thanks to the native CinemaScope, we have got rid of the black bars and still have 78 per cent more pixels available than Full HD. So the difference in resolution is not that great and the DLP image quality overall is fantastic.'

The 1,700 Lumen Orion Cinemascope has already started shipping in the US with a price tag around \$14,000. It will be distributed in the UK by Genesis Technologies.

The ultra-short throw lens add-on has a predicted availability for Spring 2015. A dedicated mounting apparatus for short-throw, rear-projection setups is also expected to appear as an optional extra during the first quarter.

The Orion is the world's first native 2.35:1 domestic projector



An ultra-short throw add-on is also available



PLAYLIST...

Team *HCC* spins up its disc picks of the month

Godzilla 3D (All-region BD)



The Blu-ray for Gareth Edwards' monstrous reboot remains a must-own for bass-hedz, thanks to an astonishingly powerful DTS-HD MA 7.1 soundtrack.

The Newsroom: Season 2 (All-region BD)



Aaron Sorkin's gripping drama series about a TV news network goes from strength-to-strength in its second year. Great stuff.

Crimes of Passion (R2 DVD)



Mad Men meets *Miss Marple* in this series of six film-length murder-mysteries based on novels by Swedish crime writer Maria Lang.

All Cheerleaders Die (R2 DVD)



Cheerleaders return from the grave to seek revenge on football jocks in this enjoyable satire.

Zombeavers (Region B BD)



This knowing horror-comedy pits a group of college kids against a swarm of undead beavers...

EXTRAS...

Small items that could make a big impression

The Time of My Life CD



While it doesn't quite live up to its 'Greatest Hits of the Movies' subtitle, this triple-disc compilation still packs in 60 cheese-tastic tracks including *Footloose*, *Neutron Dance* and *Don't You Forget About Me*.

Goodwin + Goodwin Book Ends



These stylish book ends come in a trio of film-inspired designs ('Fin', 'The End' and 'That's All Folks') and are available exclusively through www.forevercontemporary.com.

Batgirl Statue



Sideshow Collectibles is boosting its range of 'Premium Format' DC Comics statues with this 22.5in-tall limited edition sculpture of Batgirl. The statue isn't expected to ship until next July, but is available for pre-order now, priced around \$400.

An English Ghost Story



Film critic and novelist Kim Newman puts his vast knowledge of the horror genre to good use in this chilling update of the haunted house story.

EE joins set-top box fight

Four-tuner PVR to rival Sky and Virgin with unique recording options

As the worlds of mobile and TV technology become ever more intertwined, it's inevitable we'll see more companies combining telecoms and broadband businesses with TV services. Sky, Virgin and BT have already done it, and now the UK's biggest mobile player, EE, has responded to figures showing that more than 50 per cent of its 4G mobile network activity comprises video viewing.

The EE TV is a new set-top box available exclusively to EE customers that combines a Freeview HD tuner with access to internet services – predominantly catch-up TV and on-demand channels. So far so unremarkable. However, EE TV has some surprisingly ambitious tricks up its sleeve.

For starters, the EE TV box contains 1TB of memory. Obviously this means you can record large amounts of TV – up to 25 days worth, in fact. But EE is also using the huge memory more creatively.

Intriguingly, EE TV can record continually the last 24 hours of up to six of your favourite Freeview channels. Plus it can record from the start any show currently being broadcast on any channel that shares a broadcast multiplex with one of your six favourites. So if you miss the start of something, you can just 'rewind' to the beginning.

The other big innovation is its support for simultaneously streaming different content to up to four devices – including TVs, tablets and smartphones. This is made possible by four tuners – which also lets you record four shows at once.

'As the UK's biggest and fastest network,' EE CEO Olaf Swantee points out, 'we have unrivalled insight into people's changing viewing habits. This has helped us create a service that has mobile at its heart, and makes the TV experience more personal than ever before.'

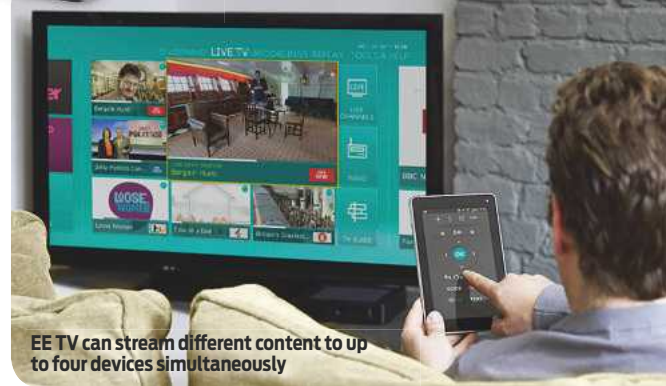


Olaf Swantee: 'As the UK's biggest mobile network we have unrivalled insight into people's changing viewing habits'

The box also benefits from a graphically rich and impressively fast suite of TV menus and an equally slick control/content-finding app for iOS and Android devices.

The EE TV broadband and TV package plans start at £9.95 a month (although this is a launch offer only available to EE mobile customers), plus £15.75 line rental, which gets you the EE TV box, broadband up to 17Mbps and weekend calls. The 38Mbps Fibre package costs £19.95, while the 'Fibre Plus' 76Mbps package is £29.95.

Streaming services are currently limited to Daily Motion, YouTube, the BBC iPlayer, Demand 5 and Wuaki.TV; there's no Netflix, Amazon Instant, ITV Player or 4OD. Still, with the box using the app-friendly HTML-5 platform, we expect that some of those missing platforms could hit EE TV soon.



EE TV can stream different content to up to four devices simultaneously

Primare retools flagship BD deck for 4K

BD32 MkII universal player adds next-gen upscaling and Netflix support

Luxury AV marque Primare has launched a second-gen incarnation of its reference-grade BD32 universal Blu-ray player that incorporates 4K upscaling and Netflix access, plus improved circuit design.

Aimed at well-heeled AV-Holics thanks to its £3,500 price tag, the upgraded BD32 provides multi-format support for Blu-ray, DVD, CD, SACD and DVD-A, and is capable of unleashing digital audio files

of up to 24-bit/192kHz resolution (as well as video and still images) from USB and DLNA sources. Audio formats playable include both stereo and multichannel DSD64 files in DFF/DSF flavour.

Behind the lush design lurks some high-end componentry, including Marvell Qdeo Kyoto-G2 video processing for 4K scaling over HDMI, and Cirrus Logic's Crystal DSD CS4398 24-bit/192 kHz DAC. Other revisions of the BD32 MkII include greater isolation of the power supplies for transport, video board and OLED display from the audio section.



The deck is available in brushed black and titanium finishes

Begin the journey at www.pioneer.co.uk/receiver



Pioneer.electronics
@PioneerUK

Pioneer

Dolby, Dolby Atmos, and the double-D symbol are registered trademarks of Dolby Laboratories. All other trademarks remain the property of their respective owners. © 2014 Dolby Laboratories, Inc. All rights reserved.

*Air Studios models are SC-LX78 and SC-LX88 only

DIARY

Our calendar ensures that you don't miss out...

→ NOVEMBER

17: How to Train Your Dragon 2

The sky's the limit for your home cinema setup as the follow-up to DreamWorks' 2010 animated smash makes its UK debut on DVD, Blu-ray and 3D Blu-ray. www.fox.co.uk

18: CONNECTIONS Europe

Amsterdam's Mövenpick Hotel opens its doors once more to this two-day tech summit, offering keynotes and panels discussing the challenges associated with the 'digital living ecosystem.' www.parksassociates.com/events/connections-europe

**20: The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part One**

The surprisingly good 'Young Adult' sci-fi franchise follows in the footsteps of *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* by splitting its final novel into two films. Catch the first at UK cinemas today. www.lionsgatefilms.co.uk

24: Dawn of the Planet of the Apes

There's just no stopping those 'damn dirty apes' as the latest (and quite possibly greatest?) instalment in the *Planet of the Apes* saga arrives on DVD, Blu-ray and 3D Blu-ray. www.fox.co.uk

28: Horrible Bosses 2

Jason Bateman, Charlie Day and Jason Sudeikis reunite (alongside a host of other familiar faces) in this sequel to the hit 2011 comedy. Find out if it's been worth the wait when *Horrible Bosses 2* opens at cinemas across the UK. www.warnerbros.co.uk

→ DECEMBER

08: The Expendables 3

If the rumours are correct, then fans of Sly Stallone's over-the-top action series can look forward to an extended 'harder' cut of this three-quel when it explodes onto DVD and Blu-ray in the UK today. www.lionsgatefilms.co.uk

11: HCC #242

The next issue of your favourite home cinema magazine hits the stands today, packed with hardware tests, features, outspoken opinion and in-depth software reviews. www.homecinemachoice.com

4K OLED rewrites rulebook

LG heralds its first 4K/UHD OLED TVs as the ultimate in display tech

LG Electronics claims that the arrival of 4K OLED TVs will bring an end to the familiar debate over which panel technology is best, Ultra HD LCD or OLED. 'We've combined the two now,' LG's commercial director Andy Mackay told HCC, 'and this new development changes the rules when it comes to display technology!'

LG will initially introduce two 4K OLED displays, the 65in 65EC980V and 77in 77EC980V. Both models are curved and feature the brand's acclaimed WebOS smart platform. Priced at £6,000 and £20,000 respectively, the arrival of these two Ultra HD sets is the culmination of years of intense (and expensive) display development.

'It's true, we have committed to a very strong investment in panel technology,' admits Mackay. 'Around 1-in-5 of all our staff in LG Electronics now works in R&D or design. We are investing, broadly, upwards of 5 per cent of our global revenue into product development – and a major part of that has been going into breakthrough panel development. OLED is a key area for us. It's our biggest agenda.'

Landmark product

HCC enjoyed an early hands-on with the incoming 65-incher (pictured) showing a selection of time-lapse cityscapes shot in native 4K as well as an upscaled clip from *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (OLED is great for depicting golden hues, apparently). We've little doubt that it's a landmark product. The 2160p resolution is bolstered by intense, deep blacks and dynamics that are positively interstellar. It's clear that panel technology is about to make another significant leap forward.

'Everybody has been trying to reach a picture-perfect ideal,' says Mackay. Citing LG Display's proprietary WRGB panel structure, he maintains that



Andy Mackay: 'We've committed to a very strong investment in panel tech... OLED is a key area for us. It's our biggest agenda'

rival OLED panels just don't come close. Key attributes, he says, are an industry-leading 160-degree viewing angle, 4.3mm panel thickness and 0.001ms response time.

'A response time that's 1,000 times faster than LED LCD makes these screens great for sports.'

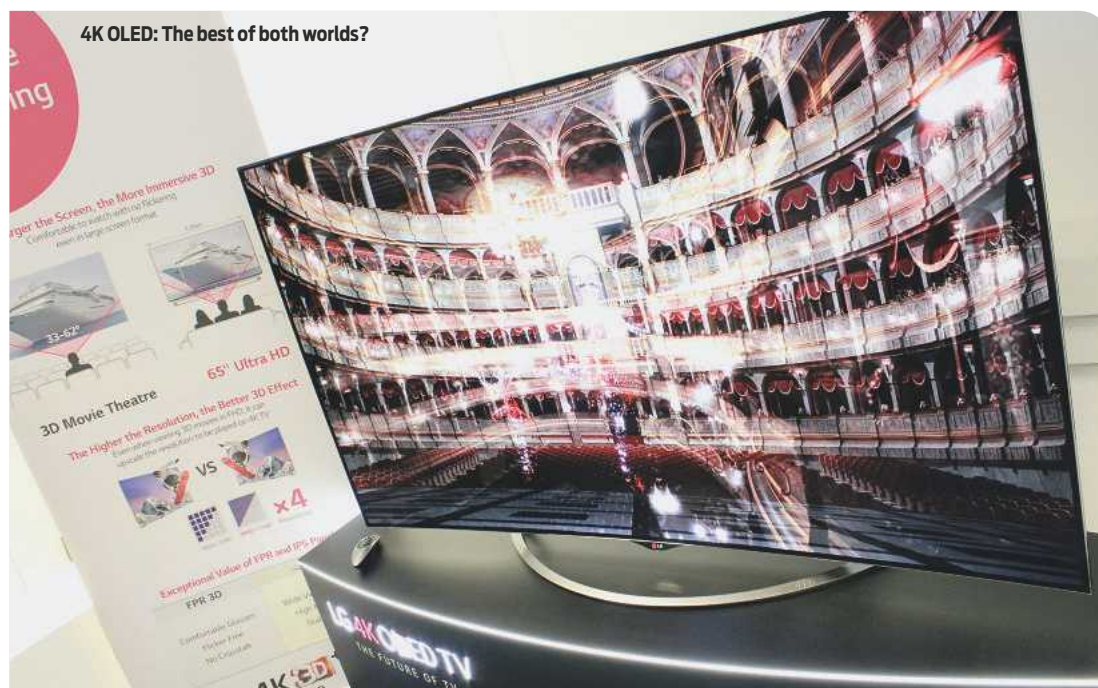
Other stats include more accurate colour reproduction at low grey levels and lower blue light emission, which apparently causes viewing discomfort. 'Blue light is visible from 380nm to 550nm, and LCD curved panels emit three times more blue light than OLED,' warns OLED Promotion Manager Brian Han.

Perhaps contentiously, LG has no plans as yet to produce flat 'Gallery-style' versions of the two new screens, although an executive didn't rule it out if there was evident consumer demand.

Ultra HD expansion

Looking forward, the brand promises a wider selection of OLED televisions at different price points and sizes, made possible by big improvements in production yield. Indeed, LG Display has inked a deal to supply three unspecified TV manufacturers with OEM OLED panels.

OLED has often been called the natural successor to plasma. During our briefing, LG suggested that it was likely to pull the plug on plasma TV production altogether this December, although ironically not because of any falling consumer demand. SVP Ki Kwon said the move was simply down to rapidly diminishing component availability. 'Other vendors exiting the market has made it difficult for us to procure components,' he revealed.



This month's top 10 news stories in handy, bite-sized chunks...



1 Sky unveils festive boxes
Sky is introducing a limited edition festive set of designs for its Now TV streaming box. The special collection features five new-look slabs: a penguin motif, gold glitter, an abstract geometric pattern, a multi-coloured lighting pattern and *The LEGO Movie*. The limited edition Now TV boxes will be available from November 24, priced £9.99 each, and can be purchased at nowtv.com/christmasbox.

2 Films on Fire
Art-house and foreign language movie VOD service Curzon Home Cinema has launched on Amazon's new Fire TV streaming device. Recent additions to the service include Hendrix biopic *Jimi: All is By My Side* and Elmore Leonard thriller *Life of Crime*.

3 Online ups and downs
Across the Atlantic, both HBO and CBS have responded to concerns about the growing number of people stopping their cable TV subscriptions in favour of streaming content online by announcing plans to launch their very own US-only streaming services. Meanwhile, Netflix has seen its share price drop a whopping 20 per cent due to a slowdown in growth of subscriber numbers.

4 Virgin TV Anywhere adds four more channels
Channel 4+1, More4+1, 4Seven and UMP Movies are the latest additions to Virgin Media's Virgin TV Anywhere on-the-go service. The news arrived hot on the heels of the addition of 15 other live channels at the start of October. This brings the total number of channels up to 113, which Virgin Media is dying to point out is 48 more than Sky offers on its own Sky Go service.

5 Sonos takes Denon to court
Sonos co-founder and general counsel Craig Shelburne has revealed that his company is suing Denon over its HEOS range of wireless audio products. In a post on the Sonos Blog, he revealed that Sonos has notified Denon's parent company D&M Holdings that it believes the products infringe at least four Sonos patents.

6 Blinkbox joins UltraViolet
Tesco-owned VOD service Blinkbox has added support for the UltraViolet digital locker service, allowing subscribers to stream digital versions of selected films they have bought as physical discs. Better late than never.

7 Guardians of the cassette
Disney is offering *Guardians of the Galaxy* fans a spot of retro nostalgia with the news that it will be making the film's *Awesome Mix Vol. 1* soundtrack available as a limited edition tape cassette through selected independent stores as part of November's Record Store Day celebrations.

8 More Auro-3D AVR's coming
Denon and Marantz are the first major AV manufacturers to sign a deal with Dolby Atmos rival Auro-3D. Firmware upgrades for a selection of compatible receivers from the brands are due soon. That said, there has still been no word on any titles coming to Blu-ray with Auro-3D soundtracks.

9 Snap happy
An upgrade to the Sky+ mobile app allows users to wirelessly send photographs taken on their smartphone or tablet to their TV. Users need to connect their phone or tablet to the same Wi-Fi network as their Sky+HD box and look for the camera icon in the app's navigation bar.

10 Toy store pulls *Bad* dolls
Toys "R" Us has pulled a range of collectible figures based on the hit TV series *Breaking Bad* from its shelves. The move came after a Florida mother launched an online petition to have them removed, claiming that the dolls (one of which comes with a bag of meth and a sack of cash) were a 'dangerous deviation from their family-friendly values.' The petition quickly gathered over 9,000 signatures. Since then, another petition has been launched calling for TRU to keep selling the figures. HCC will soon be launching a petition against people launching petitions.



Breaking Bad collectibles – not a good fit for Toys "R" Us, apparently

PREMIERE

What's happening in the world of TV and films...

Scarlett in the shell

Having cemented her action film credentials in the likes of *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* and *Lucy*, Scarlett Johansson has reportedly been offered \$10million to star in the live-action remake of sci-fi anime *Ghost in the Shell*.

Peakier blinder



Cult TV sensation *Twin Peaks* is set to make a return to the smallscreen after a gap of 25 years. Original series creators David Lynch and Mark Frost are currently working on a new nine-episode season of the show that will air on the Showtime network in the US in 2016.

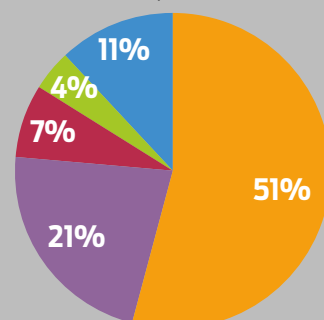
The Rock hits the bay

Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson has confirmed that he'll star in a forthcoming *Baywatch* movie. Responding to rumours about his involvement, the actor tweeted, 'Rumours are true... we're making #BAYWATCH the movie. Edgy, raunchy, hopefully funny as hell. Cue slo-mo running on the beach...'

WE ASKED...

How do you control your home cinema system?

- Multiple remote controls
- Universal remote control
- High-end touchpanel
- Tablet/Smartphone
- Other



Results from www.homecinemachoice.com
Go online for more polling action

Intergalactic thrills

Guardians of the Galaxy → Walt Disney Home Entertainment → All-region BD & R2 DVD

If you'd told people twelve months ago that 2014's biggest blockbuster would be a slice of space opera starring TV funnyman Chris Pratt alongside a walking tree and a gun-toting racoon, you may well have been laughed out of the room. Yet flash-forward to today and Marvel's *Guardians of the Galaxy* stands proud as 2014's Summer smash, and it's now set for a DVD, BD and 3D BD release on November 24. In addition to the usual array of behind-the-scenes features, plus DTS-HD MA 7.1 audio, the HD platters also promise an exclusive look at next year's *The Avengers: Age of Ultron*.



Mr Scott, energize! Who says you can't fly in an armchair: **the Excite 5.1 system.** All there is.



DYNABOARD

DIRECT DEBIT SUBSCRIPTIONS UK ONLY

Yes, I would like to subscribe to Home Cinema Choice

- ☐ **Print + Digital:** £12.74 every 3 months
(**SAVE 28%** on shop price + **SAVE 74%** on Digital Download + **FREE GIFT**)
- ☐ **Print:** £10.49 every 3 months (**SAVE 28%** on shop price + **FREE GIFT**)


YOUR DETAILS MUST BE COMPLETED

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms..... Initial..... Surname.....
Address
Postcode Country
Tel Mobile.....
Email D.O.B

I WOULD LIKE TO SEND A GIFT TO:

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms..... Initial..... Surname.....
Address
Postcode Country

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUR BANK/BUILDING SOCIETY

Originator's reference 422562 
Name of bank.....
Address of bank.....
Postcode
Account holder.....
Signature..... Date
Sort code Account number

Instructions to your bank or building society: Please pay MyTimeMedia Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with MyTimeMedia Ltd and if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Reference Number (official use only)

Please note that banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of account.

CARD PAYMENTS & OVERSEAS

Yes, I would like to subscribe to Home Cinema Choice, for 1 year (13 issues) with a one-off payment

UK ONLY:

- ☐ **Print + Digital:** £53.49
(**SAVE 24%** on shop price + **SAVE 74%** on Digital + **FREE GIFT**)
- ☐ **Print:** £44.49 (**SAVE 24%** on shop price + **FREE GIFT**)

EUROPE & ROW:

- ☐ **EU Print + Digital:** £72.00
☐ **EU Print:** £63.00
☐ **ROW Print + Digital:** £74.00
☐ **ROW Print:** £65.00

PAYMENT DETAILS

☐ Postal Order/Cheque ☐ Visa/MasterCard ☐ Maestro
Please make cheques payable to MyTimeMedia Ltd and write code X261 on the back
Cardholder's name.....
Card no: (Maestro)
Valid from..... Expiry date..... Maestro issue no.....
Signature..... Date.....

Offer ends 11th December 2014. MyTimeMedia Ltd & Home Cinema Choice may contact you with information about our other products and services. If you DO NOT wish to be contacted by MyTimeMedia Ltd & Home Cinema Choice please tick here: ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Phone. If you DO NOT wish to be contacted by carefully chosen 3rd parties, please tick here: ☐ Post ☐ Phone. If you wish to be contacted by email by carefully chosen 3rd parties, please tick here: ☐ Email

POST THIS FORM TO: HOME CINEMA CHOICE SUBSCRIPTIONS, TOWER HOUSE, SOVEREIGN PARK, MARKET HARBOROUGH, LEICS LE16 9EF





HURRY
OFFER
CLOSES
DECEMBER 11
2014

PRINT + DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION

Free pair of TH-5 headphones worth £49.99*

13 issues **delivered to your door**

Save up to **28% off the shop price**

Download each new issue to your device

A **74% discount** on your Digital subscription

Access your subscription on **multiple devices**

Access to the **Online Archive** dating back to August 2011

Exclusive discount on all orders at myhobbystore.co.uk





PRINT SUBSCRIPTION

Free pair of TH-5 headphones worth £49.99*

13 issues **delivered to your door**

Save up to **28% off the shop price**

Exclusive discount on all orders at myhobbystore.co.uk

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

DIGITAL
SUBSCRIPTIONS
AVAILABLE ONLINE!

Receive a pair of
Fostex TH-5 headphones*
when you subscribe today

WORTH £49.99*



SAVE
28% ON THE**
SHOP PRICE &
74% ON DIGITAL

The acclaimed Fostex TH-5 headphones are reborn with improved sound quality and a new streetwise design. Featuring revamped ear pads and headband, the TH-5 ultra-modern headphones (which retail for £49.99) have been designed for comfort and extended use, both on the move and at home, with semi-open acoustically-designed diaphragms delivering crystal-clear, well-defined highs and balanced reproduction across the frequency band. Fostex's TH-5s are manufactured from ultra-light materials

(these comfortable cans weigh in at under 250g) and pack a superb audio quality that outperforms many rivals. Subscribe today and grab yourself a pair.

Specifications:


- Impedance: 44 ohms
- Sensitivity: 96dB/mW
- Max input level: 100mW
- Diaphragm diameter: 30mm
- Weight: 250g

TERMS & CONDITIONS: Offer ends 11th December 2014. *UK Direct Debit offer only. Please see www.homecinemachoice.com/terms for full terms & conditions.

SUBSCRIBE SECURELY ONLINE

 www.subscription.co.uk/hccl/x261

CALL OUR ORDER LINE

 **0844 543 8200 (quote ref X261)**

Lines open weekdays 8am - 9.30pm & Saturday 8am - 4pm

BT landline calls to 0844 numbers will cost no more than 5p per minute. Calls from mobiles usually cost more.



We've been harping on about 4K content ever since 2160p panels first broke cover, and now it seems 8m-pixel movies, in the shape of a UHD upgrade to the Blu-ray standard, are in sight. While the Blu-ray Disc Association (BDA) continues to play some cards close to its chest, it's confirmed a pre-Xmas 2015 debut for 4K Blu-ray has been scheduled. So although board member Ron Martin confided to *HCC* that this isn't actually set in stone ('It's a reasonable target for us to hit, but it would also be a good target for us to miss...'), and it remains to be seen if the launch date is US-only with Europe to follow sometime in 2016, we at least now have something to help justify our 4K screen purchase beyond streaming services from Netflix and Amazon.

With 12 months to go, we already know key headline facts about the new format, and can make educated guesses to fill in the blanks: 4K Blu-ray will use the HEVC compression codec and will stream from the drive at a whopping 50-70Mbps (mighty impressive when compared to Netflix 4K's miserly 15.6Mbps). Resolution support will be 3,840 x 2,160 up to 60fps.

But what else do we want to see from 4K Blu-ray? And how should the BDA avoid disappointing those of us still committed to physical media? We have some suggestions... >

FROM 4K BLU-RAY

A year from now, Blu-ray will finally get its long-anticipated 4K upgrade. For movie collectors and AV connoisseurs this could be the most significant format launch since DVD ousted VHS. **Steve May** offers some suggestions on how to make the next great disc format fly rather than flounder



01 A NAME THAT MAKES SENSE

Even today, the Blu-ray tag has a whiff of cheese about it. So let's not try to be too clever with the monicker, eh? Frankly, we could all live with 'Blu-ray 4K' or '4K Blu-ray' but it's unlikely the BDA will be that pragmatic. It's a fair bet that early working titles for the new standard have already included Ultra HD Vision, Blu-ray XL and Space Disc 3000 (our favourite). And given that the CEA has validated

both 4K and UHD as nomenclature for next-gen TVs, they may try and shoehorn both into any final branding. Common sense might suggest that the powers that be actually opt for UHD-DVD, in a forlorn attempt to persuade those users still cosseting the DVD format to upgrade, but that's probably a little too close to Toshiba's abandoned standard for comfort.

02 SMART FUNCTIONALITY FOR A CONNECTED TOMORROW

Just because a 4K BD deck will spin discs of supreme quality, don't think we'll be satisfied with a paucity of connected functionality. Players have evolved into hub devices for all manner of services, and we want that to continue into the 4K era. So we demand the ability to stream 4K VOD via our shiny new decks, as well as network to all and sundry on a LAN, both wired and wirelessly. Hi-res codec support should be mandatory, and that's for both sound and vision files – give us the ability to stream our FLAC and DSD downloads as standard. And some level of standardized app and disc interactivity would be a natural fit for second screeners (it's what the kids do). Just let it be more ambitious than BonusView...



04 GORGEOUS HARDWARE DESIGN

Wouldn't it be nice if player designs blew people's socks off? To be honest, we really don't expect any great industrial design innovation, no matter how futuristic the spec, but we certainly hope that first-gen kit will be built to a high standard rather than commoditized from the outset – metalwork rather than Bakelite for the chassis and a disc mechanism that slides like Lizzy Yarnold rather than rattles like a draw of plastic cutlery. The initial product wave needs to recoup R&D costs, and that means premium pricing and hopefully appropriate build quality. 4K BD could

be a welcome return to aspirational separates. Imagine if Oppo built a PS4? We kinda think that would fit the bill.



03 IT'S ABOUT AUDIO, TOO

With great picture quality should come great sound. While there's been plenty of speculation about the visual parameters of 4K BD, from HDR dynamic range to extended colour gamut, little has been said in regard to audio. We're hoping for mandatory 3D sound, in the shape of Dolby Atmos and DTS MDA. Given that Hollywood studios can't be trusted to do the right thing, let's ensure that we get the highest fidelity the industry can deliver on these discs by enshrining it into the spec.

Software shouldn't be an issue. Atmos is fast becoming an everyday fixture of sound and post-production studios, and the imminent DTS MDA audio format seems likely to gain similar traction. Not heard of the latter? It's a one-DCP-fits-all, object-based theatrical sound system that scales locally to whatever number of speakers and configuration your viewing room has. It's a natural disc rival to Atmos. Oh, and chuck in Auro-3D, too.

05 SUPPORT FROM HOLLYWOOD

The BDA should do absolutely whatever it takes to launch 4K Blu-ray with across-the-board multi-studio support. The last thing we want to hear at the lavish format unveiling in Shoreditch is that 20th Century Fox is fixated on downloads or that Disney didn't sign up – the idea of embarking on a 4K Blu-ray adventure without the prospect of Marvel Studio's spandex output or any new *Star Wars* movies would be any early hammer blow. Unfortunately, when it comes to new formats there's often little unanimity amongst studio bigwigs, and the relatively late arrival of 2160p discs will have to contend with years of corporate write-downs on physical media sales. 4K Blu-ray's biggest challenge might not be consumer confusion – it could be boardroom indifference.

AURO-3D OR DOLBY ATMOS? WHY CHOOSE?



The **Datasat Reference Series RS20i** and **Luxury Series LS10** are the first home cinema processors in their category to support both **Auro-3D®** and **Dolby Atmos®**. Now you have fully immersive 3D cinema sound in your home. Why worry about the audio format? Just sit back and enjoy a new experience in breathtaking sound.

DATASAT. BRINGING CINEMA SOUND...HOME.



DATASAT
DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT



+44 (0)118 934 9199 • europesaless@datasat.com • www.datasatdigital.com

06 4K TITLES WE ACTUALLY WANT TO BUY

Early take-up of 4K Blu-ray will rest almost solely on the launch catalogue. A well-chosen selection is certain to warm a collector's cockles quickly; token twaddle will have the opposite effect. Of course, disc formats NEVER get this right. Launch catalogues invariably reflect mainstream charts, bolstered by whatever old tat is hanging around, and not the collector's market. Remember how excited you were to buy *Into the Blue* on BD, chosen for no other reason than the title? Exactly.

4K BD has to be different. Early adopters are picky and deserve respect. They are not going to evangelize Michael Bay's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* – they'll want Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* instead – so don't program for a pre-teen audience. The back-catalogue market becomes particularly interesting when you factor in 4K. Studios have invested huge sums restoring some of cinema's greatest movies at UHD res, from *Lawrence of Arabia* to *Dr Strangelove*, so let's have them on early release. And genuine blockbusters are welcome, too: *Batman Vs Superman* would be a natural launch title for Warner. *Smurfs 4* less so.



07 DON'T IGNORE THE PAST

We've had assurances that this next iteration of Blu-ray will be compatible with the last, but there's some devil in the detail. Regarding movies, while it may be possible to produce single-inventory software, it will certainly be commercially more attractive for vendors to offer 4K BDs as a separate SKU from Full HD Blu-ray, priced accordingly high. In time, this may evolve into the kind of single-package triple-play releases we see today (Blu-ray, DVD and UltraViolet), but it could be a while before 4K Blu-rays are two for £15 on Amazon, and those who aren't early adopters may find themselves eventually buying the same film twice.

And what of those who own HDMI v1.4 4K TVs? Again, the BDA's Ron Martin has given us some insight, stating that 'We're not going to leave anyone not capable of playing anything.' For instance, he suggests BD decks will give a 24p pulled-down version of any 60p material if it's connected to an HDMI v1.4 screen. Make that happen!

08 NO RETURN TO REGIONAL CODING

While there remain some exceptions, software companies have largely managed to ditch the infuriating habit of region-locking their software releases. Studios have seemingly taken a pragmatic approach to the issue, much to the relief of enthusiasts everywhere. Let's hope we don't see a return to this habit with the launch of 4K, which could potentially debut with Starfleet-grade encryption technology, not

least HDCP 2.2. It's unlikely there are any additional rights issues arising from the resolution hike on 4K movies, so we remain (perhaps foolishly) optimistic.



09 HDR AND HFR COMPATIBILITY

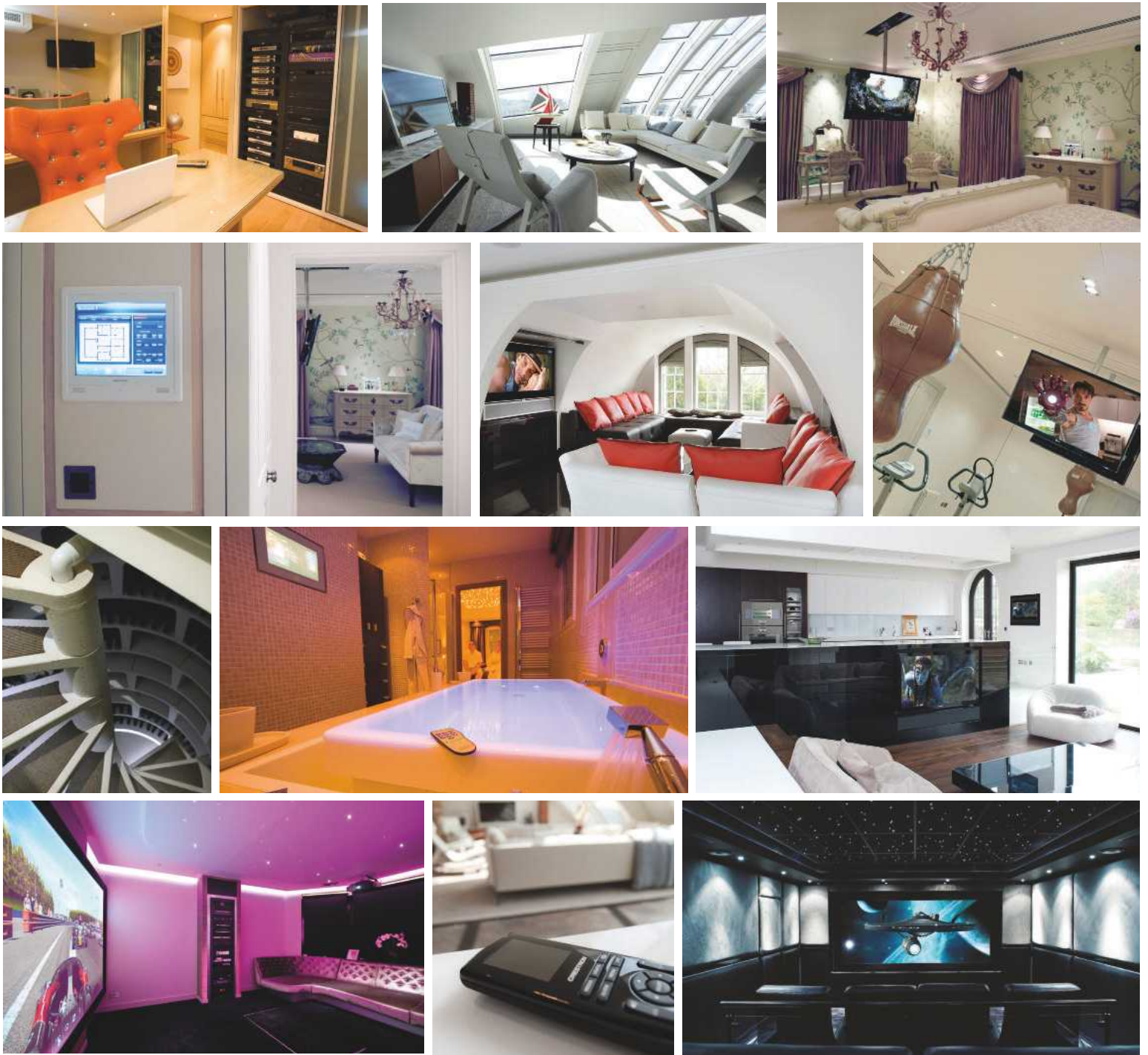
4K Blu-ray will arrive even as the 4K broadcast standard continues to evolve. Quad Full HD resolution may be attractive, but the TV and broadcast industries have already embarked on a path to High Dynamic Range (HDR) and High Frame Rate (HFR) content. Don't confuse the latter with cinematic 48fps *Hobbit*-style japes – we're talking rates of 100fps and higher.

There's little UHD Blu-ray can do about this particular evolution, not least because the HDMI pipeline remains a bottleneck to even greater fidelity. The system will debut with support for 2160p at 60fps, which is fine for the foreseeable future, as most movie releases will continue to be produced at 24fps. We've also been told there will be some room for manoeuvre for HDR content as and when it becomes available. Hopefully this isn't the spectre of Blu-ray Profiles rearing their ugly head again...

10 A COMPLETE FORMAT – NO PROFILES!

In its rush to combat HD-DVD, the Blu-ray standard was launched half-baked. Early players spun discs, but lacked some of the fancier features studio boffins envisaged we'd all be hankering for after the linear experience that was DVD. Profile 1.0 begat 1.1 which led to 2.0 and so

on. As it happened, no one much wanted BD-Live, but such technical prevarication was just irritating, and a slap in the face for earlier buyers. Let's not do that again. 4K BD needs to land fully-formed. Frankly, the BDA 4K Working Group has had plenty of time to work out the minutia ■



All good technologies answer a problem, they give a solution that both delights and inspires everyday living. That's why we design technology installations for homes and offices that quite simply make them better places to be.

Our specialist knowledge, extensive experience and collaboration with leading architects, interior designers and contractors mean we have produced some of the most beautiful and sophisticated installations in the world.

You can probably tell we are passionate about bringing innovation to you – contact us now to discuss how we can make your audio visual aspirations a reality.

smartcomm
integrating technology with vision

3 Barnes Wallis Court,
Cressex Business Park
High Wycombe
HP12 3PS

Telephone: 01494 471912

email: info@smartcomm.co.uk

web: www.smartcomm.co.uk



'Dear Santa...!

With Christmas just around the corner, it's time to grab yourself a few system add-ons, so **Team HCC** has created a wishlist of AV accessories, furniture, software and books. Send it on to Lapland...



Treat your ears to surround sound

Sony's MDR-HW700DS headphones are a smart purchase if you want to carry on enjoying surround sound without using your regular speaker system – perhaps for late-night sessions. At £400 they're certainly not cheap, but our experience suggests the feature set and performance offered is worth it.

The package actually comes in two parts – the headphones themselves and an

HDMI-equipped digital surround processor. The latter offers multiple inputs for various sources, and an HDMI output (which even passes 4K video) to route to your display. The menu system, which can be accessed via a button on the right-side earpad of the headphones, appears on screen.

The wireless cans (rechargeable via USB) sit comfortably over your ears. Their headline trick is to deliver a virtual 9.1 soundstage,

adding front height and rear back channels to a regular 5.1 mix. This is achieved via proprietary Virtualphones technology, and it works. Imaging is surprisingly accurate, with a real sense of scale and spaciousness to the soundstage. Furthermore, the performance of the headphones' 50mm dome drivers is on the money, too, with a pleasing bass response. Wireless transmission is smooth as silk.

www.sony.co.uk

MOVIE BOOKS...



Titan's book also serves as a visual tribute to *Alien* artist H.R. Giger, who died this year

Alien: The Archive – The Ultimate Guide to the Classic Movies

The number of books written about the *Alien* franchise easily dwarfs the number of actual films. But don't let that put you off this lavishly illustrated 315-page hardback, which raids the 20th Century Fox archives to bring you the most exhaustive photographic record of the production of these four iconic sci-fi flicks. The perfect companion to the fantastic Blu-ray boxset.

www.titanbooks.com

The Star Wars

Adapted from George Lucas' original rough-draft screenplay, this comic book adaptation gives fans a look at the *Star Wars* movie we almost got – one where our hero is Annikin Starkiller, Han Solo is a big green alien and imperial troops ride around on giant space ostriches. An intriguing, alternate take on a familiar tale, vividly brought to life through 175 pages of superb art.

www.titanbooks.com





Add some Atmosphere to your cinema

If an in-ceiling makeover isn't feasible, you can still upgrade to Dolby Atmos courtesy of add-on speakers that use reflective technology to create the height layer. US brand Atlantic Technology is the latest company to proffer such a product, in the form of its 44-DA modules, brought to the UK by distributor The Multi-Room Company.

Measuring 140mm high and 212mm wide, the Atlantic 44-DA is primarily designed to fit snugly on top of the brand's THX-certified 4400 floorstanders, to create a 'one-piece' design. Yet the 44-DAs can, of course, be stacked on any speaker, or anywhere else in your room that suits your setup – on a shelf, for example.

Each speaker uses a concentric driver array of a 1in silk dome tweeter and a 5.25in woofer, fed via a Dolby Atmos-certified crossover to ensure that the notch filter wizardry that creates the illusion of height is delivered.

Pricing is around £600 per pair.
www.multi-room.com



Beef up your Sonos system

Those who have embraced the slick world of Sonos for their multiroom audio needs will be tempted by the company's new Boost accessory. Working in a similar manner to the Sonos Bridge, this £80 gizmo aims to boost the reach of streamed audio by creating a more robust Wi-Fi network for your Sonos speakers to latch on to. Fancy an audio zone in your garden shed? This could do the trick.

www.sonos.com



Get some hi-res hits

The much-hyped American hi-res music download giant HDTracks has now surfaced on this side of the Atlantic, so audiophiles are advised to have a browse when building their Yuletide playlists. Files are available for purchase in AIFF, ALAC, FLAC or WAV formats, with sampling rates ranging from 44kHz/24-bit all the way up to a few titles at 352kHz/24-bit. As always, much of the catalogue is culled from the world of classical music, but there are plenty of modern artists here, too – from Adele to ZZ Top, in fact. Pricing starts at around £17 approx for a full album.

www.hdtracks.co.uk

FESTIVE FLICKS

Hollywood's finest films with a dash of Blu tinsel

Die Hard

This iconic actioner takes place on a fraught Christmas Eve in LA, with detective John McClane battling hi-tech robbers and trying to get home in time for mulled wine. Pick up Fox's boxset and you can enjoy the fun, festive sequel, too.

Gremlins



Joe Dante's classic comic horror sees malevolent beasts run amok in smalltown America over the Xmas holidays – cue spooky tales of wannabe Santas getting stuck in chimneys. The region-free BD offers TrueHD 5.1 remixed audio.

It's a Wonderful Life

Capra's heart-warming fantasy will no doubt get a Christmas airing on terrestrial TV, but for pristine 1080p visuals (and the choice of watching either the original B&W iteration or a well-done colourised treatment) you need the Blu-ray.

The Nightmare Before Christmas



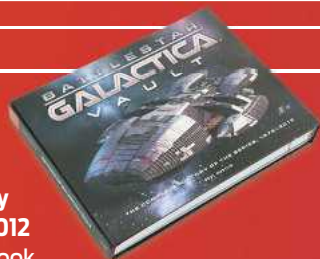
This macabre stop-motion musical imagines a world where the denizens of Halloween Town take over the running of Christmas. Originally made in 1993, Walt Disney has since released a ret-conned 3D Blu-ray edition.

Black Christmas

Stick to the 1974 original starring Margot Kidder and John Saxon – and not the 2006 remake – and you're guaranteed Christmassy chills with this proto-slasher. Available as a region-free US import loaded with informative extras.

Battlestar Galactica Vault: The Complete History of the Series, 1978-2012

More than a 'mere' book, behind this publication's gatefold cover lies a wealth of treats for fans. As well as detailed accounts of the production of both shows and their spin-offs, you get some fun memorabilia, including a vintage poster and copy of Starbuck's map.
www.facebook.com/aurumpressbooks



The Classic Doctor Who DVD Compendium

The BBC's original *Doctor Who* DVD range is one of the most comprehensive accounts of the TV programme ever attempted, with each disc loaded with bonus features. This invaluable guide not only helps you remember which extras are on which disc, it also provides a potted history of the range and any overseas variations.
www.wonderfulbook.co.uk



BAG A BOXSET...



The Sopranos: The Complete Series

You can bin those old DVDs – HBO's gripping drama starring the late James Gandolfini about New Jersey mobsters is finally available in its entirety on Blu-ray. This 28-disc set includes around five hours of bonus content, including a brand-new 45-minute documentary charting the show's legacy.



Breaking Bad: The Complete Series

If you're really addicted to this crystal meth-soaked award-winning crime series, then you'll be jonesing to get this 'Limited Edition Heisenberg Tin' featuring *Breaking Bad*'s six seasons and flaunting an exclusive two-hour *Making of...* documentary about the programme's climactic final run. Available on either DVD or Blu-ray.



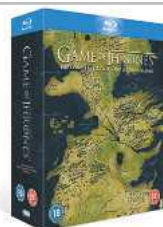
Stray Cat Rock: Limited Edition Collection

Japanese action starlet Meiko Kaji heads the cast in this quintet of frenetic, stylised pulp films made in 1970/1971. Collected as a limited edition Blu-ray boxset, each flick gets a 1080p transfer and uncompressed mono audio, while bonus bits include trailers, interviews and a booklet.



Seinfeld: The Complete Series

The record-breaking sitcom celebrates its 25th anniversary with all nine seasons re-released on DVD in a single boxset. The £80 price tag gets you 180 episodes of the funniest show ever to spew forth from US network television, or 4,140 minutes of irritating studio laughter and slap bass music, depending on your point of view.



Game of Thrones: The Complete First, Second & Third Seasons

The big-budget production values and epic scale of this fantasy adaptation make it perfect home cinema fodder – and this triple-season set will tide you over until Season 4 arrives in BD in February. And, as it's the most pirated TV show in history, producer HBO could probably do with the kickback.



The Killing: The Complete First, Second & Third Seasons

Eradicate any sense of festive cheer with some gloomy Nordic Noir. Well, sort of: this box set houses the first three series of the American remake of hit Danish crime drama *The Killing*, which sees the action move from Copenhagen to Seattle. Chow down on these and then catch the fourth (and final) season on Netflix.



Sgt. Bilko: The Phil Silvers Show – The Complete Collection

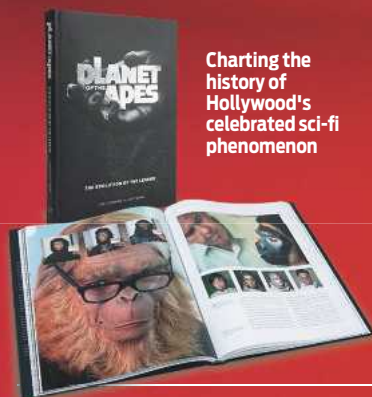
Tenshun! More classic American comedy, with all four seasons of army base japey brought together by UK distributor Mediumpare in a 20-disc DVD set. There's a platoon of extras here too, including chat tracks, lost footage, interviews with Phil Silvers, the BBC doc *Bilko on Parade* and a 32-page booklet.



Vincent Price in Six Gothic Tales by Edgar Allan Poe

Stuffed with extras – including newly-commissioned artwork on reversible disc sleeves – this fright-filled boxset packs 1080p presentations of six classic horror tales based upon the works of the celebrated Gothic author, from *The Raven* to *Pit and the Pendulum*. Genre legend Vincent Price stars in all six, under the production gaze of B-movie master Roger Corman.

MOVIE BOOKS...



Charting the history of Hollywood's celebrated sci-fi phenomenon

Planet of the Apes: The Evolution of the Legend

Running from the origins of Pierre Boulle's original 1963 novel to the recent blockbuster hit *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, this hefty tome looks back across five decades of movie history. It's an in-depth book that digs into every nook and cranny of ...Apes history, from tie-in merchandise to aborted plans for a reboot starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in the early '90s. www.titanbooks.com

Showrunners: The Art of Running a TV Show

Released to tie-in with the documentary film of the same name, Tara Bennett's book is a must-read for anybody with an interest in the machinery involved in getting their favourite TV shows off the ground. Joss Whedon and Damon Lindelof are among the industry insiders pulling back the curtain on their work. www.titanbooks.com



Primare SPA23

Celebrating Pure Audio



“the SPA23 can make grown-up speakers bleed. Performance is outstanding. The Primare SPA23 is an unashamedly uncomplicated home cinema amp, enlivened by gorgeous design and ingenious amplification technology. It’s fit, fast and capable of class-leading clarity.”



September 2014

The SPA23’s modular design allows for DSP, video and connections to be upgraded easily with proprietary Primare boards.

karma
audio - visual

karma-av.co.uk

For more information please contact Karma or visit primare.net

Ramp up your radio

Ruark has retooled its R1 DAB/ DAB+/FM radio for a second time with a host of design, UI and feature tweaks. Available in Soft White and Soft Black lacquers or a Rich Walnut finish (pictured), that combines real wood lippings and veneers, the R1 MkIII now incorporates an OLED front display and improved top-mounted 'RotoDial' controller for slicker operation, and adds a Bluetooth receiver for personal music streaming. Other features of this neat-looking £200 tabletop radio include 3.5mm device connection, a USB charge port, headphone output and alarm clock functionality.

www.ruarkaudio.com



Silent night, Silent White...

The curvy Silent White from AV furniture brand Somé offers accommodation for your flatscreen (up to 55in/50kg) and source equipment, plus built-in speakers for a fuss-free audio upgrade. Taking care of bass duties is a 6.5in subwoofer, joined by a pair of tweeters and a pair of mid-range drivers. Connectivity runs to two HDMI inputs and one output, a USB for MP3, WAV and WMA playback, stereo analogue audio input, optical digital audio input and an aux input. Bluetooth hookup is also an option.

www.valueav.co.uk



Stream at speed!

We're big fans of Devolo's dLAN range of powerline adapters, and it's recently added a super-fast addition to the family in the shape of the dLAN 1200+. Claiming to be the swiftest powerline adaptor on the market with data rates reaching 1200Mbps, this tech-tastic plug allows data streaming around your home's mains network, ensuring optimum performance and no concerns about Wi-Fi reception. And each plug doubles as, well, a plug. Pick up a duo starter pack for £130 approx.

www.devolo.com/en

MOVIE BOOKS...

From killer dolls to spacefaring gigolos, this book has the lot...



Empire of the 'B's: The Mad Movie World of Charles Band

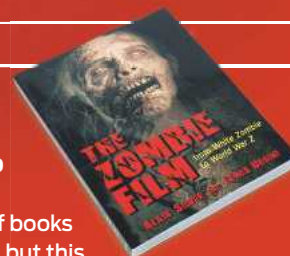
If, like us, you spent a large part of the 1980s hanging around in video rental stores, then you'll no doubt be familiar with producer Charles Band and his legacy of straight-to-video schlock. This fantastically fun analysis runs through the good, the bad and the ugly as the writers explore the B-movies Band made, up to the fall of Empire Pictures at the end of the '80s.

www.hemlockbooks.co.uk

The Zombie Film: From White Zombie to World War Z

There's no shortage of books about zombie movies, but this one is still worth checking out. The content is more up to date than most, for a start, and it spends just as much time digging around the more obscure corners of the sub-genre as it does dealing with more familiar fright-flicks.

www.halleonardbooks.com





The heart and soul of home cinema

Precision, a luxury and highly regarded loudspeaker range from Tannoy, engineered to deliver movies precisely as the director intended. High power double-magnet drivers, mass-load cabinets and extremely low-loss crossovers effortlessly deliver breath-taking detail and explosive movie dynamics. Built around a brand new 6 inch (150 mm) version of Tannoy's world renowned Dual Concentric™ driver, two stunning floorstanding models, a compact stand-mount and matching centre channel speaker ensure there is a Precision multichannel system for every size room. Powerful, passionate and incredibly precise, Precision gets to the heart and soul of home cinema like no other speaker in its class.



tannoy.com



October 2013 - Precision 6.2



Precision 6.2



Precision 6.4



Precision 6.2 / 6.1 / 6C /
TS2.12 system



Precision 6.2 / 6.1 / 6C /
TS2.12 system

WIN

A PHILIPS SCREENERO WORTH £1,400!

THE PHILIPS SCREENERO is the ultimate home cinema gadget – and thanks to our friends at Philips we have one to give away to a lucky reader.

An ultra short-throw projector, the Screeneo offers fuss-free installation and the ability to craft bigscreen images in any room regardless of space available. A screen size of 50in can be achieved from a distance of only 10cm, and the Screeneo supports images up to 100in for home entertainment on a massive scale.

Its LED-powered DLP engine delivers crisp 720p images that are rich in colour. Three HDMI inputs allow simultaneous hookup of, say, a BD player, games console and set-top box – alternatively, a built-in DVB-T tuner brings instant TV entertainment.

The flexible Screeneo is loaded with other useful features. Hidden within its stylish chassis is a 26W

speaker system packing stereo speakers and a subwoofer, meaning movies, TV and games can be enjoyed without the need of a separate audio setup. The Screeneo also offers Bluetooth audio streaming, as well as music, image and video file playback from USB, SD card and networked devices – both Ethernet and Wi-Fi are offered. Add in the onboard Smart platform that includes a web browser, Office and YouTube, and you've got an all-singing, all-dancing media hub.

The Screeneo retails for £1,400 approx, but until January 17 buyers can claim *X-Men: First Class*, *Rio 2* and *The Grand Budapest Hotel* on Blu-ray, plus £150 cashback, by entering their purchase details online at www.philips.com/screeneocashback. Or, enter our competition and you might grab one for nothing!



BRAIN BOX

The Screeneo can play media files via Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, Ethernet, SD card and USB



For more information on Philips' Screeneo projector, visit www.philips.co.uk

To be in with a chance of winning the Philips Screeneo please answer the following movie-related question:

Q: Steven Spielberg directed which of these science-fiction movies?

- A)** 2001: A Space Odyssey
- B)** Back to the Future
- C)** Close Encounters of the Third Kind

HOW TO ENTER:

Simply email your answer (either A, B or C) to competitions@homecinemachoice.com with the subject line 'Philips Screeneo'. You must include your name, address and contact telephone number.

The closing date for this competition is December 31, 2014. Please read the terms and conditions (below) before sending in your entry.

The Screeneo uses an LED lamp to produce bright, colour-rich images



Competition rules

- 1.** The first entry drawn at random will win the prize. **2.** Only one entry per person; multiple entries will be discarded. **3.** Employees of MyTimeMedia Ltd and companies supplying competition prizes are not eligible to enter this competition. **4.** Please ensure your personal details are correct, as they will be used to contact you if you win. **5.** No alternatives, cash or otherwise, will be offered to the winner as prizes. **6.** The editor's decision is final. **7.** The closing date for entries is December 31, 2014.

TRANSFORMING

The first Dolby Atmos mix arrives on *Transformers: Age of Extinction*. **Steve May** puts it to the test against traditional TrueHD 7.1



BY THE END of the year, nearly all the key AV receiver manufacturers will have models compatible with the new Dolby Atmos 3D audio format. Atmos differs from conventional surround in that it features a height component and 'object-tracking' skills.

The format is making big headway in Hollywood, with more than 200 Atmos movies already produced. Yet worldwide theatrical adoption of the sound system has been relatively

slow, as the format waits for expensive refurbishment windows to roll around. All of which makes an Atmos-enabled AVR upgrade all the more attractive.

Of course, these are early days for home media, with only one Blu-ray available at the time of writing – Michael Bay's metallic clank-fest *Transformers Age of Extinction*. Frustratingly, many of the home theatre must-haves now coming to disc boasted Atmos theatrically but are missing it on Blu-ray: *Godzilla*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *X-Men Days of Future Past*

AUDIO

– all fan favourite films now lacking Atmosphere, thanks to the vice-like grip of DTS-HD MA.

The *Transformers: AoE* Atmos soundmix was created by Academy Award nominee Greg Russell. He describes *AoE* as the 'perfect film for Dolby Atmos.' So what can we learn from this debut release? Just what benefit does Atmos bring to the home and realistically how does it compare to the established Dolby TrueHD 7.1, when compared blow-for-blow on a seven-channel AVR?

Entertaining debut

Whatever your view of the value of Bay's *Transformers* oeuvre there's no doubt that *AoE* is technically a standout Blu-ray and a uniquely entertaining system tester.

A direct scene-for-scene comparison between the TrueHD 7.1 mix, which utilises both surround back and rear back channels, and Atmos in a 5.1.2 configuration, reveals some intriguing differences, not all of them in the new format's favour. And, of course, there's much that sounds the same between the two.

The first scene takes us back to an alien invasion of Earth many years ago. A small beaky beast is about to have his squawks overshadowed by a much larger dinosaur, whose roar is heard surround-right before rolling to surround-left. Seconds later, we're facing a stampede of CGI-osaurus.

In both mixes, the sound placement is the same, with the final rush very L/C/R weighted. Curiously, the LFE seems more pronounced in the Atmos mix, although the sound pressure level between the two tracks measures high-on identical.

This sequence is immediately followed by a classic back-to-front fly-in as a plane heads down to an Arctic base. Perhaps surprisingly, the effect is a good deal less impressive in Atmos than it is in straight seven-channel. Instead of zooming in from behind the listening position, the plane magically appears in the surround-right >

Atmos: adding height to the soundstage



WIN! WIN!

Fancy winning a copy of *Transformers: Age of Extinction* on Blu-ray? Of course you do...



The must-see sci-fi blockbuster *Transformers: Age of Extinction* explodes onto Blu-ray, 3D Blu-ray, DVD and VOD on

November 17. And to celebrate the release, Paramount Home Media Distribution has given us five copies of the Blu-ray to dish out.

In addition to the revolutionary Dolby Atmos soundtrack, the two-disc *Transformers: Age of Extinction* Blu-ray also comes loaded with a wealth of bonus goodies, including an in-depth interview with director Michael Bay and mammoth eight-part *Making of...* documentary.

To be in with a chance of winning a copy of the Blu-ray, answer the following brain-teaser...

Question:

Which of the following is the leader of the Autobots?

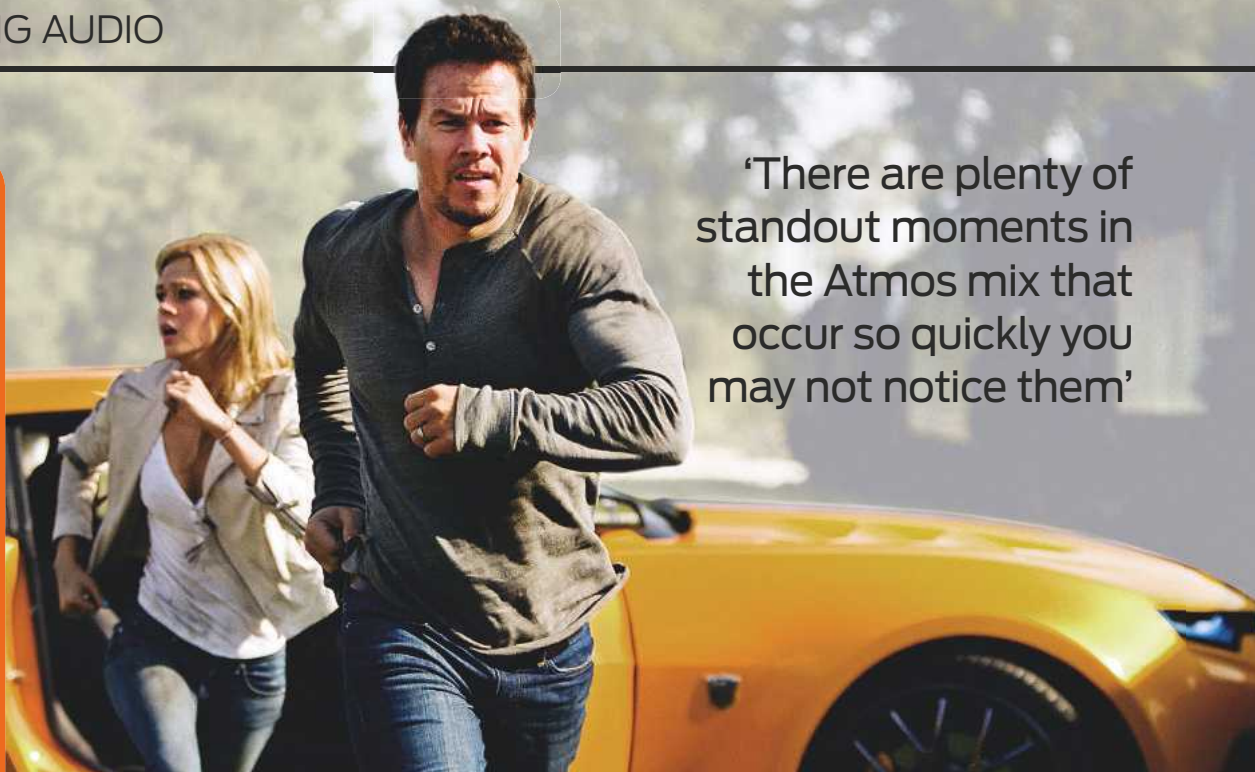
Answer:

- A) Megatron
- B) Optimus Prime
- C) C-3PO

Email your answer to Competitions@homecinemachoice.com with 'Transformers' as the subject heading – and include your postal address!

Full terms and conditions can be found on p90.

'There are plenty of standout moments in the Atmos mix that occur so quickly you may not notice them'



speaker. As a result, the seven-channel mix seems larger and more expansive.

When we're introduced to Mark Wahlberg's Cade Yeager character, he's rummaging around an old movie theatre. Japing around, he throws a football to his slacker chum, played by T.J. Miller, hitting him square on the head. Miller tries to return the ball. In the seven-channel mix, the ball bounces high front-right and lands in the rear-back channel, but in the Atmos iteration, the ball's trajectory is completely different. After hitting offstage front-right, it appears to fly higher and return to the screen from the rear right of the soundfield. Sonically this corresponds much better with the onscreen visual of the returning ball. The overall imaging is more believable.

A key sound sequence occurs at the end of the movie (Chapter 20 of the Blu-ray), when Longshot's massive spaceship uses a giant magnet (obviously) to suck up all the metal content it can find, including ships, cars and the odd Autobot from Hong Kong harbour. The effect makes a particular virtue of the height speakers when it plays theatrically, with pulsating oscillating tones that move from the side walls up into the centre of the cinema, to give an almost bewildering sense of vertical movement.

When the magnetic pulse from the mega magnet is unleashed in 7.1, it sits fixed in both the front and rear channels, and doesn't appear to budge. Indeed, the first time you actually hear this fluttering effect at volume, you'll most likely fear for your loudspeaker drivers. What then follows is a shower of ships,

propellers and assorted debris. Sound effects blanket the soundstage, and it's undeniably impressive

– but there's no sense of movement. The sequence is punctuated when a tidal wave crashes in from the rear, as our Autobot heroes fall back. When the Star Ferry drops, there's an

impressive, tangible, thump. The ensuing melee is a wonderful cacophony of aural effects, with copious clanks and LFE rumbles.

Switch to Atmos and the sequence sounds radically different. Longshot's magnetic space weapon audibly appears to be syphoning metal upward into a black hole in the ceiling. There's also far less of the disturbing speaker-flapping heard in the 7.1 mix, replaced instead by a more believable sonic vortex. It's a terrific piece of audio design.

However, yet again there are swings and roundabouts. When the heavy machinery falls back to Earth, and that propeller bounces over Mark Wahlberg's car, the debris field sounds somehow smaller. Taken as a whole, the sequence is more ingenious in Dolby Atmos, but is it actually more entertaining? Not necessarily.

Of course, there are plenty of standout moments in the Atmos mix that occur so quickly you may not notice them – it's all part of being caught up in the AV spectacle. At 2:26:41 on the disc, we get 'I'm proud of you!' followed by a flyover of a spacejet, which we quickly see is chasing Bumblebee riding a two-headed Dinobot (don't ask). The effect is locked to the rear but has a sensational sense of height as it moves over your head. You'll grin broadly.

Time for something new

So what can we deduce from this Atmos debut? Perhaps most importantly, the format brings something new and different to the home cinema listening experience. Used creatively, it conjures up a sonic environment unlike any we've heard in the home before, despite multiple attempts by post-processing codecs like Audyssey DSX. But conversely, Atmos doesn't render 7.1 redundant, and in several cases the latter mix can actually sound better!

For enthusiasts this is a win-win situation. Upgraders can configure their new AVR however they want, opting for Atmos as and when. And buying an AVR now that doesn't offer an Atmos upgrade path is a far more perilous choice. *Caveat emptor*, as Optimus Prime would no doubt sagely say ■

Transformers: Age of Extinction is full of fast-paced metal beasts...



Mission Accomplished

At Cyberhomes our award-winning home cinema designs and installations aren't just about the amazing picture and jaw-dropping sound.

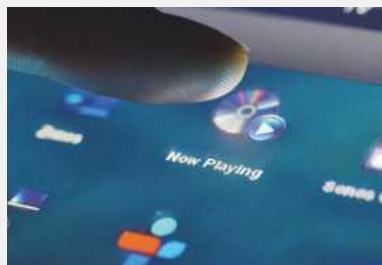


Finalist in the CEDIA 2014 awards for "Best Dressed Rack".

We can also implement the lighting, the seating, the acoustics, the intuitive control system from Savant, Crestron or Control4, and so much more.

Call us now on **0845 094 2718** to discuss your project or to book a demonstration in our amazing new demonstration facilities featuring the immersive Dolby Atmos 3D sound experience.

For details visit www.cyberhomes.co.uk/hcc



SAVANT

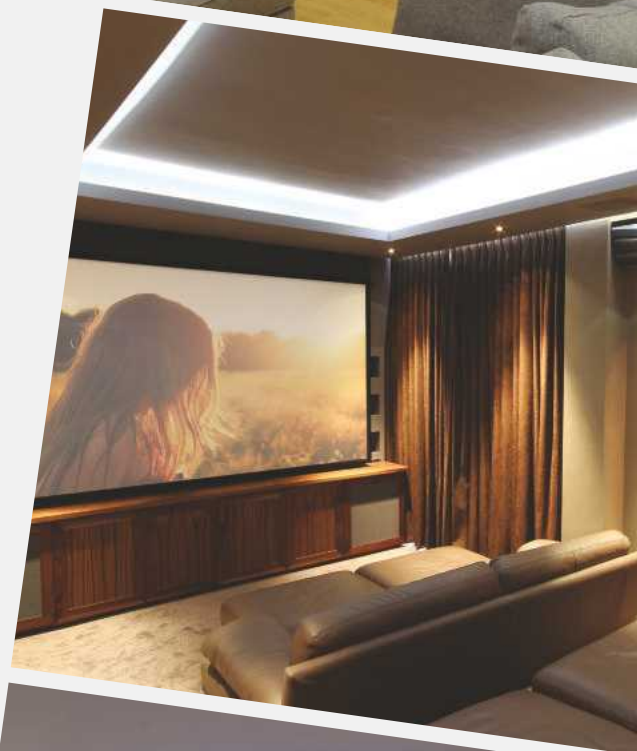


Home cinema design and installation • Lighting control systems • Multi-room audio and video
Home automation • CCTV and security • Data and communication networks • Climate control

0845 094 2718

hello@cyberhomes.co.uk

www.cyberhomes.co.uk



Twin-screen living

Why choose between a bigscreen TV and projector when you can have both? **Mark Craven** reports on a stealth cinema room that caters to its owner's AV needs both day and night

24, AGAIN!
Jack Bauer and pals return in ...*Die Another Day*, p100

KIT CHECKLIST

EPSON: EH-TW9000W Full HD 3D LCD projector

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL: 2.5m motorised projector screen

PANASONIC: TX-P65VT30B 3D plasma TV

ONKYO: TX-NR1009 AV receiver

ONKYO: BD-SP809 Blu-ray player

BOWERS & WILKINS: 4 x CWM7.4s; 3 x CWM7.3s; 1 x ISW-3 in-wall subwoofer

SKY: Sky+HD satellite receiver/PVR

CONTROL4: HC-300 home control processor

FUTURE AUTOMATION: PD2 motorised projector lift

Anyone fancy a game of pool?

Although the Epson projector is bright enough to perform in daylight, blackout blinds are being added



IN THIS EYE-CATCHING multipurpose room delivered by CEDIA-award-winning installer Cyberhomes, the emphasis is on discreet multichannel audio, simplistic control and everyday use. It's a good example of how to combine a regular living area with bigscreen entertainment.

Okay, maybe it's not exactly a regular living area – not everyone has a room large enough (7m wide by 15m deep) to house a pool table as well as a gargantuan corner sofa! But the hardware here isn't from the cost-no-object AV catalogue. Rather, the cinema uses eminently affordable kit, neatly installed and controlled.

For HD visuals, both a 65in Panasonic plasma and Epson EH-TW9000W projector are employed. The latter, when not needed, resides in a ceiling void, dropping down via a Future Automation PD2 projector lift. Similarly, the 2.5m screen from Screen International is also motorised. The system is handled by a Control4 setup. Selecting Blu-ray automatically turns the TV off, kicks the screen and projector into life, and dims the lights. (There are four lighting circuits integrated into the system: downlighters around the room edge, colour-changing LED strips, freestanding reading lights and 'disco lighting'.)

The room features a 7.1-channel system using Bowers & Wilkins models. All, including the subwoofer, are mounted in-wall, as the owner, Trevor, didn't want freestanding cabinets. The solution – building a false wall to accommodate the front speakers and sub – also enabled built-in cupboards to accommodate DVDs, Blu-rays and hardware.

Cyberhomes admits it would have preferred a dedicated rack, as it makes AV management easier. 'Consideration had to be given to how everything could be accessed for maintenance and future upgrades, and as well as the AV equipment we also had to find space for the Control4 system and the lighting packs. Therefore we made the built-in cupboards

wider than originally intended with continuous access between all the units.' They also added an access cupboard at the far left of the front wall for lighting and mains power control. 'Along with ceiling voids behind the false wall, this ensures we have maintenance access to all the cable runs (including the motorised screen) should it ever be required.'

Trevor tells HCC he did a lot of research into what he wanted before approaching any specialist AV integrators – and that Cyberhomes were the only company he spoke to who seemed to 'get' what he wanted to achieve. He had preconceptions about the hardware he thought would be suitable, but allowed the installers to suggest alternatives that would be a better fit.

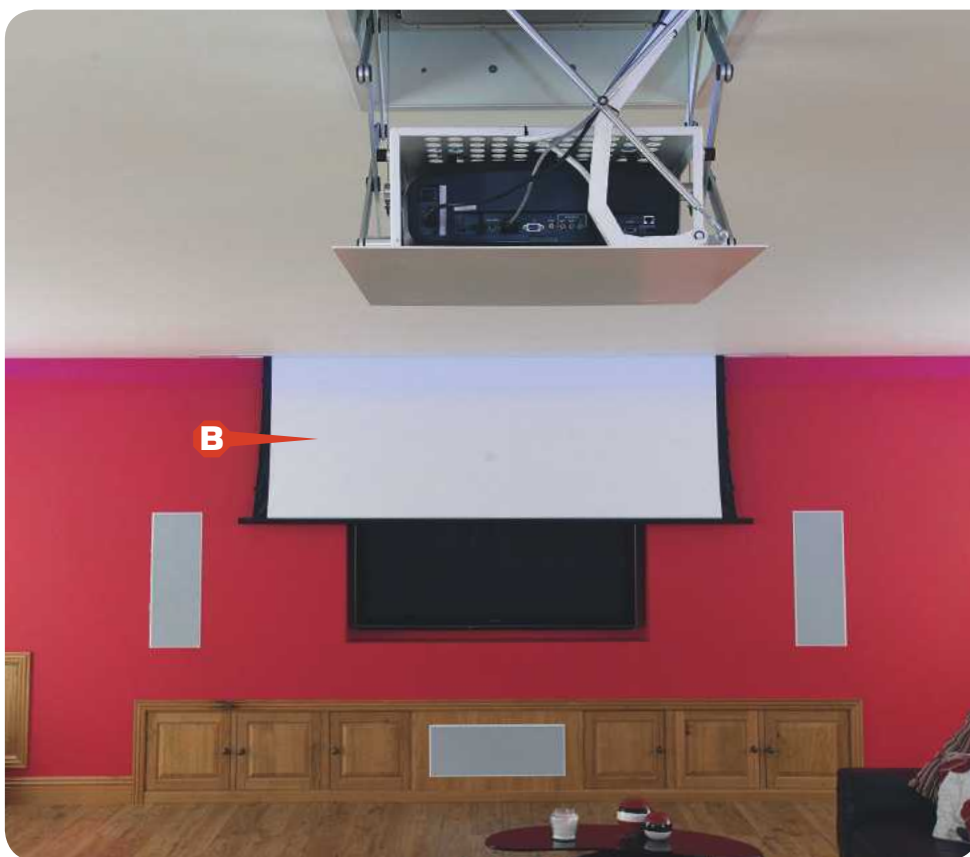
Unsurprisingly, he's chuffed with the end result. 'It was a brand-new room – freshly decorated – so I had some concerns but they pulled it off with no issues. The system is above and beyond expectations, and comes with the wow factor. The 3D projector is outstanding!'

Typically, at least two movies are watched in the cinema each week. When friends come around for a movie night who haven't experienced the room before, Trevor loves to demo the opening coach crash scene from *Fast and Furious 5*, admitting he gets a thrill from seeing his guests duck for cover, or spin round to look behind them, as the sound effects come from all directions.

Blackout, no doubt

There will be further modifications to the space once other refurbishment work in the rest of the house has been completed, reveals the installer. 'The next stage is to include full blackout blinds to allow more use of the PJ during the day. Having said that, the Epson projector is more than bright enough to be run in daylight, and was used extensively for watching World Cup matches in the Summer.'

And with the 65in plasma, the room gets used every day – despite there being another living room in the home. It's obviously become the place to be! ■



INSTALL INFO

A ONKYO POWER

The 7.1 speaker array is driven by an Onkyo TX-NR1009 AV receiver, housed in the front kit cupboard

B DROP-DOWN DELIGHT

The motorised 2.5m Screen International projector screen lowers into place when the owner wants to go large with his movies

C IN-WALL AUDIO

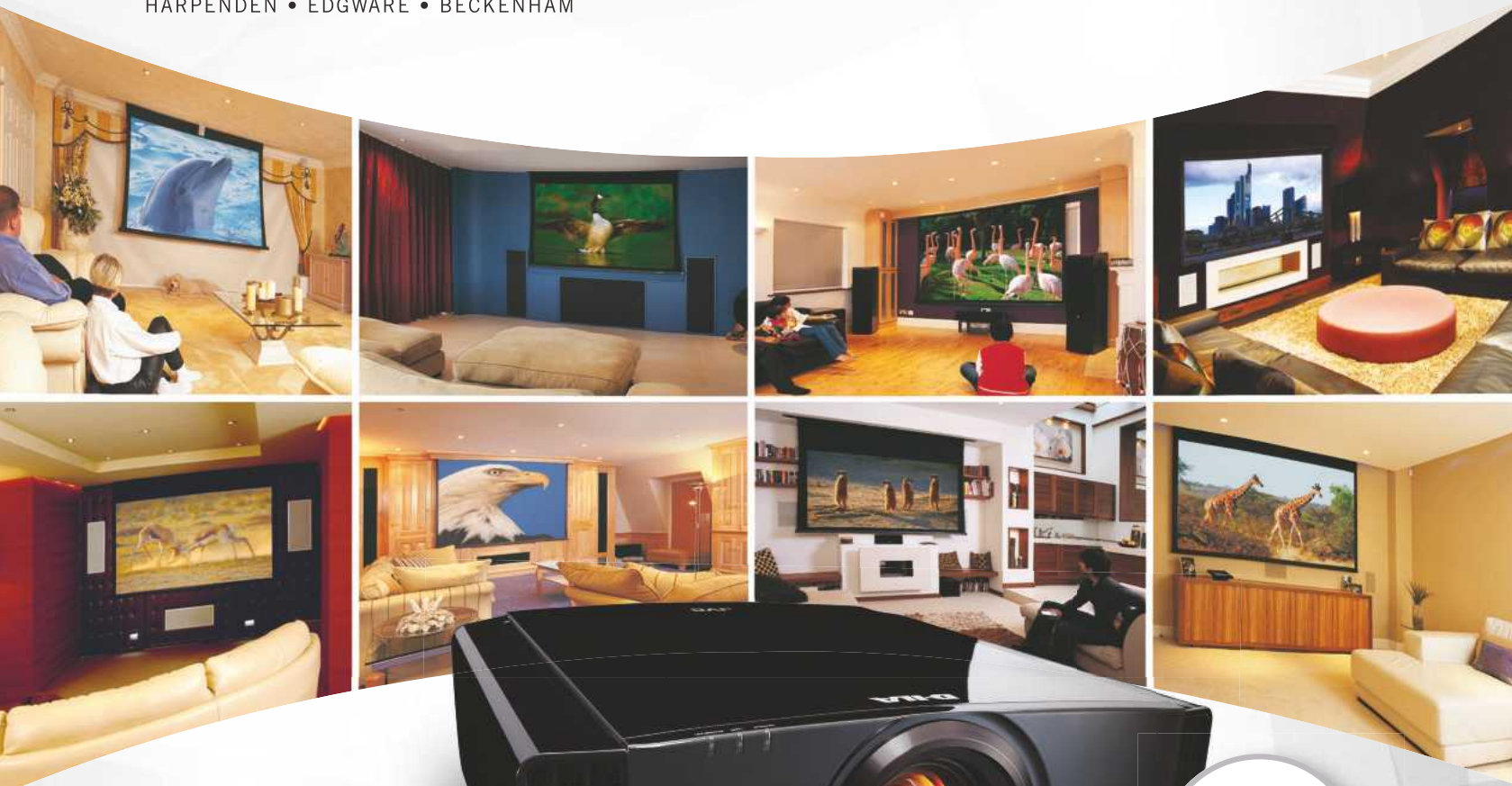
All the speakers (including the subwoofer) are from Bowers & Wilkins' in-wall stable. The surrounds are fitted within custom-made pillars

D ILLUMINATING OPTIONS

Preset lighting scenes are accessed via an on-wall panel, Crestron controller or iOS app



HARPENDEN • EDGWARE • BECKENHAM



JVC

JVC DLA-X500
3D Projector

GET THE COMPLETE PICTURE

At Musical Images we have a choice of all the finest home cinema equipment on permanent demonstration, including the stunning JVC X500 projector. With 3 showrooms, 7 demonstration rooms, expertise, experience, patience and professionalism, for the very best in entertainment there's no better destination than Musical Images.

Musical Images Showrooms

82 High Street, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 2SP
01582 764246 harpenden@musicalimages.co.uk

**NEW
SHOWROOM**

173 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JX
020 8952 5535 edgware@musicalimages.co.uk

126 High Street, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1EB
020 8663 3777 beckenham@musicalimages.co.uk

Opening times - 9.30am to 5.30pm

**HIFI • HOME CINEMA • MULTIROOM AUDIO • HOME AUTOMATION
LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEMS • A/V DESIGN & CONSULTANCY**

Audio Visual Lifestyle Ltd trading as Musical Images. Finance options available, subject to status. E&OE

3 times award winner
HOME CINEMA CHOICE
"Best Multiroom Installation"



www.musical-images.co.uk

musical images

@musical_images

★ THE UK'S PREMIER ★ CULT CLASSIC FILM LABEL

theguardian

LABEL OF THE YEAR
2011 & 2013



2013

l'immagine ritrovata
film restoration
& conservation

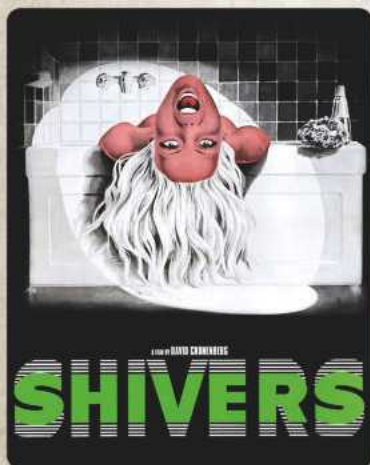
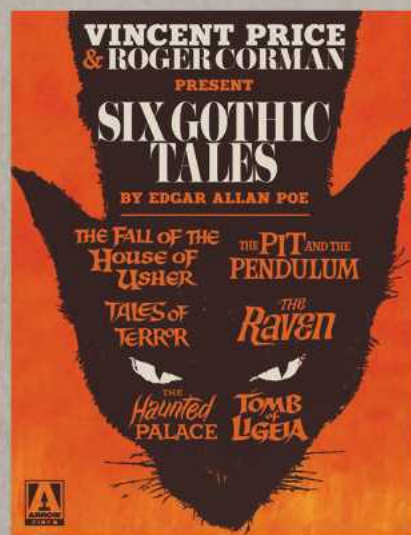
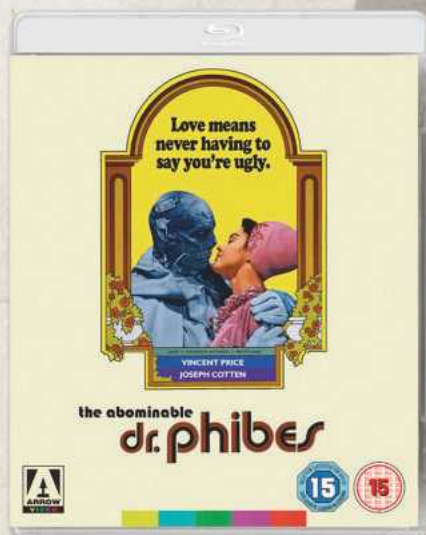
2014

BLOODY
DISGUSTING

2013

HOME CINEMA
Choice

LABEL OF THE YEAR • BEST EXTRA
BEST REMASTER • BEST PACKAGING
2010 & 2013



FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON FORTHCOMING RELEASES VISIT:



REVIEWS

→ **HARDWARE HIGHLIGHTS** LG Top-of-the-range 65in 4K TV & soundbar/subwoofer duo **PIONEER** £2,200 9.2-channel AV receiver **PANASONIC** 5.1-channel all-in-one home cinema system **DENON** Upper mid-range AV receiver supporting Atmos **SONY** Affordable Smart Blu-ray player **ORBITSOUND** £300 soundbar **GROUPTEST** Four 47/48in Full HD TVs go head-to-head... **AND MORE!**

Wireless wonder

Epson's EH-TW6600W offers cable-free HDMI transmission – and solid image credentials. See p50



HCC RATINGS KEY...

Outstanding	★★★★★
Above average	★★★★☆
Acceptable	★★★☆☆
Disappointing	★★☆☆☆
Dire	★☆☆☆☆

LG's high-end 4K TV combines brilliant Smarts with great images. **John Archer** reports

Bold and beautiful

LG HAS HAD a topsy-turvy year in TV. On the upside, the brand's taken the Smart TV world by storm with its WebOS interface. On the downside, it's struggled to keep up with some rivals on the picture quality front.

Chiefly, this is because the IPS panels it employs in its LED-lit flatscreens have failed to deliver the sort of contrast performances we've come to expect from rival LCD technologies. If any TV's going to lift LG into the A-List, though, it's the 65UB980V. After all, this is the company's flagship 65in model for 2014, and as such it comes packing the highest levels of LG's hardware and software wizardry.

The 65UB980V is a 4K/UHD display, boasting the requisite 3,840 x 2,160 pixel count as well as 60p, 4K-friendly v2.0/HDCP 2.2 HDMI inputs, and enough processing power to handle the difficult job of upscaling today's HD and even standard-definition sources to 4K.

In fact, it delivers the so-called 'Pro' version of LG's Tru-ULTRA HD Engine, which advances on the processing found on LG's more affordable 4K screens by claiming more accurate detail via a tweaked Super Resolution feature; and by reducing motion blur over moving objects via something delightfully referred to as a 'Motion Estimation Motion Compensation' circuit. Yep, that really is what LG seems to be calling this new feature.

Motion should also benefit from the 65UB980V's combination of a native 100Hz panel, frame interpolation and backlight scanning – LG claims an overall 1,300Hz-refresh rate. However, there's a danger that such heavy-duty

LG supplies a standard handset and a Magic Motion pointer



ATMOS ATTACK!

The robots in disguise are back – with next-gen audio, p32



The 65UB980V is LG's top-flight LED flatscreen

AV INFO

PRODUCT:
65in 4K/UHD TV
with Passive 3D

POSITION:
LG's flagship LED TV
for 2014 – 79in and
84in models are
also available

PEERS:
Sony KD-65X9005B;
Samsung
UE65HU8500





Tru-ULTRA HD processing upscales sources to 4K resolution

processing will introduce a few pixel gremlins when the going gets tough.

And for contrast improvements, the 65UB980V uses a greater number of local dimming zones than models further down the range.

Serious sonics

LG's bid to offer a truly premium AV experience from this £3,000 screen means attention has been paid to audio, too. Jutting out boldly from its slim frame are angled-back speakers that run down practically the entire height of the TV. Designed in conjunction with Harman/Kardon, these provide 70W of sonic immersion in a 4.2-channel configuration.

Obviously these speaker 'wings' make the 65UB980V more of an imposition on your living room than other 65in models – with the exception of Sony's KD-65X9005B, which is even bulkier courtesy of its front-facing speaker drivers either side of the screen. Yet the design is still attractive and build quality is outstanding. I doubt anyone will care about the space invasion.

As with any self-respecting high-end flatpanel, the 65UB980V is stocked with the usual Smart features, including media file playback from – and TV tuner recording to – USB (there are three inputs); DLNA streaming (Ethernet/Wi-Fi); a wide-ranging

and voluminous supply of online apps and features, including a good range of video on demand services; and Miracast-enabled screen mirroring.

All of the 65UB980V's Smart features and content sources are made brilliantly accessible by the lovely graphics, slick organisation and multi-tasking of the WebOS operating system.

The 65UB980V supports 3D playback using LG's Passive system, and goes to town with its picture calibration tools,

'If 3D had always looked this good on TVs it wouldn't be as roundly unloved as it seems today'

including extensive fine-tuning of colour, white balance, gamma and contrast elements, as well as most aspects of the brand's video processing engine. It's no surprise to find it has earned the endorsement of the Imaging Science Foundation (ISF), and I'd suggest anyone investing £3,000 in this bigscreen – especially if it will form the centre-piece of a quality home cinema

setup – gives a professional calibration serious consideration.

Immersion tank

Sitting down to immerse myself in the LG's largescale visuals proved to be a generally exhilarating experience. This is a 4K display with solid performance chops. But such is the competition that it's not quite the best around. Not quite.

Firstly, it's simply awe-inspiring with 3D. So clear, clean, detailed, bright, contrast-rich and involving are the 65UB980V's images with favourite funny-spex titles like *Pacific Rim* and *Prometheus* that it felt as if I was watching them for the first time. I routinely spotted new image details and better-defined spaces than I'd witnessed before. If 3D had always looked this good on TVs then it's hard to believe it would have ended up being as roundly unloved as it appears to be today. Indeed, the only less-than-positive thing about the 65UB980V's barnstorming 3D efforts is that they serve to make the fairly spectacular crosstalk problems of LG's step-down UB950V 4K TV series look all the more inexplicable.

And improvements on the rest of the Korean corp's lineup are apparent pretty much everywhere else you look. For instance, it became quickly obvious as I started putting



The eye-catching speaker 'wings' provide expansive audio

the 65UB980V through its paces that its improved backlight controls and image processing help it produce better visuals than anything I've seen from other LG TVs this year, with the exception of its high-priced state-of-the-art OLED screens.

The main reason for this is that it delivers dark scenes much more successfully. The night-time assault on the Louvre towards the end of *Edge Of Tomorrow* (see p98) illustrates that having more local dimming zones to play with enables the 65UB980V to produce something much closer to a natural black. Just make sure you've set the TV's backlight setting quite low (to its 40-50 level).

Just as importantly, bright objects against dark backgrounds exhibit less evidence of the top-to-bottom rectangular light strips that characterise other locally-dimmed LG IPS panels. Pictures retain more dynamism during low-light material, with peak elements offering more punch while darker portions uphold their integrity.

Colour resolution is refined, something that comes to the fore while watching *Edge Of Tomorrow*'s detailed and nuanced Blu-ray image upscaled to the 65UB980V's UHD pixel count. This, together with the most sophisticated and least messy motion processing system LG has delivered to date, equates to a highly impressive 4K image. After all, adding detail to a picture isn't just about introducing more pixels; you need to get the colour and 'vector' of those extra pixels right too. It's in this all-encompassing approach to adding resolution to HD images that the 65UB980V's premium processing engine can most clearly be seen.

Dining out on 4K

As well as looking great with upscaled HD, the 65UB980V is supremely confident with native 4K sources, be they the obligatory

House of Cards on Netflix or any of the many UHD video clips I've now collected onto USB sticks and video servers. Some 60p 4K World Cup football footage looks particularly striking, as the high frame rate gives LG's own silicon less scope for fudging the crispness of the 2,160p image.

Native 4K images of course also benefit from this screen's colour and contrast prowess. The improved black level response allows fine shadow details to come through, which in turn helps convey 4K's dramatic sense of depth.

For all their general brilliance, though, the 65UB980V's pictures are not completely reference-grade. The dark scene issues associated with IPS panels are greatly reduced, but not entirely absent. There are rival 4K TVs that deliver deeper black colours, and the 65UB980V also suffers occasional appearances of light-blocking around bright objects. And when you see these, you can't help but be distracted by them.

It also struck me that the 65UB980V's native UHD and upscaled HD images both appear slightly softer/less crisp than they do on some other 4K flatscreens. This certainly isn't to say they don't still shine as '4K,' just that they're a little less razor-sharp. Finally in the negative column, on occasion the fleshtones you get from upscaled HD images look strangely short of tonal subtlety, leaving some faces looking rather monotone and, as a result, more like plastic masks than natural skin and bone.

Despite this shortish list of issues, the 65UB980V is still a very good all-round picture performer. And it's an even more unequivocally positive audio performer. Those Harman/Kardon-derived speakers handle the profound dynamic range, large scale and startling detailing of *Edge Of Tomorrow*'s repeatedly relived battle scenes brilliantly, combining a deep, clean bass response with a superbly fulsome and distortion-free mid-range and huge quantities of crystalline treble detailing.

In fact it sounds pretty much as good as the magnetic fluid speaker system installed on Sony's X9005B 4K TVs, and that's basically the highest praise you can offer a TV's audio system at the moment.

A choice to be made

When push comes to shove, the 65UB980V's residual contrast flaws and marginal 4K softness mean it's not as insanely brilliant in the picture department as the Sony KD-65X9005B or Samsung UE65HU8500. However, it is a touch cheaper than both of those, and the WebOS operating system is as close to a killer app as the Smart TV world's got right now. Those two attributes may be all you need to be swayed. And I doubt you'll be disappointed ■

ON THE MENU



→ Selecting sources, streaming apps and making user adjustments are all aided by LG's ultra-slick operating system, particularly when used in tandem with the point 'n' click remote

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: Yes. Passive

4K: Yes. 3,840 x 2,160

TUNER: Yes. Freeview HD

CONNECTIONS: 4 x HDMI (inc v2.0 support); 3 x USB; component video input; RGB Scart; composite video input; headphone jack; Ethernet; built-in Wi-Fi; optical digital audio output; CI Slot

SOUND: 70W in 4.2 configuration

BRIGHTNESS (CLAIMED): N/A

CONTRAST RATIO (CLAIMED): N/A

DIMENSIONS (OFF STAND): 1,456(w) x 832(h) x 75(d)mm

WEIGHT (OFF STAND): 37.6kg

FEATURES: Tru-ULTRA HD Engine Pro processing; Super Resolution sharpness booster; Magic Motion remote control; WebOS Smart TV interface; multichannel speaker system from Harman/Kardon; local dimming system; DLNA and USB media playback; Miracast screen mirroring; ISF-certified calibration tools

HCC VERDICT



LG 65UB980V

→ £3,000 Approx → www.lg.com/uk

→ Tel: 0344 847 5454

HIGHS: Awesome 3D picture quality; spectacular audio; WebOS interface is brilliant; good 2D image quality

LOWS: Black levels not as deep as some; occasional traces of backlight 'blocking'; no 4OD or ITV catch-up apps

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



AV INFO

PRODUCT:
Nine-channel Dolby Atmos AVR

POSITION:
Top of Pioneer's 2014/15 stable

PEERS:
Denon AVR-X5200W;
Onkyo TX-NR3030;
Yamaha RX-A3040

Richard Stevenson enjoys the flexibility of Pioneer's range-topping SC-LX88 receiver

Partying with Dolby Atmos

PIONEER'S NEW FLAGSHIP AVR comes to the *HCC* test bench fresh from its Dolby Atmos firmware upgrade, bristling with features that will have both music and movie fans salivating. It's a lavishly-engineered top-flight powerhouse that deserves an audition if you're upgrading your setup – although it does have one curious flaw...

I'll get to that flaw soon enough. In the meantime, the facts. This is a 9.2-channel receiver with 32-bit ESS Sabre DAC and all-digital amplification throughout. On the audio side, Pioneer claims a very healthy 220W-per-channel output and sonic tuning by AIR Studios. On the video side, you have full 4K upscaling and power-off HDMI passthrough (but not HDCP 2.2 support) for those quieter TV watching moments. You get eight HDMI inputs (one with MHL) and three outputs, multizone setup and plenty of legacy connections including an MM phono stage. Although, as the turntable is rapidly becoming the new must-have audio accessory, maybe that is not as 'legacy' as it once was.

In fact, this Pioneer does a lot more than give a passing nod to those buyers who like their audio *sans* pictures. Its USB input connects easily to any PC or Mac without drivers, and it will accept pretty much any audio format, including up to native DSD. Moreover, Pioneer has used the high-speed processing of the DAC to enable upsampling of native digital audio to 192kHz/32-bit before hitting the amplifier stage in an effort to ensure the most accurate music reproduction. This is a well-regarded feature common to hi-fi-specific two-channel DACs and you can always defeat the function if you want true in/out purity.

Streaming music from 'net-connected DLNA devices or a Windows8 PC is a doddle, and the SC-LX88 comes with vTuner internet radio and Spotify Connect on tap, as well as

AirPlay and iPod compatibility via USB. For a bit of instant music gratification it also offers apt-X Bluetooth. A Wi-Fi adapter is included in the box so you don't need to dig out an Ethernet cable to access the network features either (although I recommend it for robustness – particularly when doing a firmware update).

That all reads like a wish-list for a modern stereo amplifier, so you can see this Pioneer aims to have a very wide appeal. Adding to its all-round allure is the moderately stylish design, solid-feeling build and phalanx of logos stuck to the front fascia. Interestingly, though, the SC-LX88 dumps the THX Ultra2 certification of the outgoing SC-LX87. Given that waving a THX badge doesn't really have the impact it used to, this is probably no surprise as flourishing one comes at a cost to manufacturers.

First-world problem

For those looking to be so much at the cutting-edge of AV tech that they're constantly putting plasters on their fingertips, the headline feature here is Dolby Atmos processing. But, hang on! As a 9.2-channel amplifier the Pioneer can only drive nine of the speakers in an Atmos system – 5.1.4 or 7.1.2 are both possible natively.

Now, you would have thought an add-on stereo amp might bag you a full-fat 7.1.4 Atmos system via the Pioneer's 11.2-channel pre-outs. Alas not. The brand says the SC-LX88 only has the capability for 9-channel 'processing,'



No THX this time around, but AIR Studios tuning is still badge-worthy...

meaning this is rather more skinny than the full-fat we hoped for.

That will leave some of you in a bit of a dilemma – mainly those already with a traditional 7.1 array and a desire to add four height speakers. Do you instead go 7.1.2 or 5.1.4? I auditioned the latter – having gone through all sorts of domestic upheaval to fit four ceiling speakers, I was damn well going to use them – and discovered it makes

'A night in with back-to-back action flicks proved to be a stomach-churning festival of LFE'

Atmos really come alive, even if there is something of a hole in the soundstage behind the sofa with rear-backs missing.

For that fully-fledged Atmos experience, an alternative is to check out a rival model at around the same price point. Yamaha, for instance, assures us that its RX-A3040 will provide 7.1.4 Atmos using its nine channels plus an additional stereo amp.

Easy operation

Pioneer's amps are hard to knock when it comes to simple setup and sheer usability. The SC-LX88 is a breeze to get running, even if you have no prior knowledge of using an AV receiver. Part of this class-leading package is the Pioneer AV Controller app. Now in its fifth generation, it looks fantastic, is as slick as an oiled panther, and contains an inspired wiring navigator sub-app that leads you (excuse the pun) connection-by-connection through the hooking up of your speakers and sources..

With the supplied microphone positioned in the listening position (on top of your head is still a good suggestion), Pioneer's automated MCACC Pro setup is two button clicks away and requires just one pass in one mic position. Five minutes later the job is done. The results seemed spot on and it easily detected a ceiling speaker that some muppet installer (well, me) managed to wire out of phase.

I guess Pioneer is expecting you to use the app for much of the day-to-day operation as the remote control is nothing special. It's functional, learning and partly back-lit in red, but it remains a simple stick full of little buttons. I do, however, appreciate the one-button access to channel levels, as I am a great fan of running with a level balance that sounds right rather than simply measures right. Want some more overhead action? Simply add a bit of gain to those channels.

We are light on consumer Dolby Atmos-encoded material at present, and there doesn't appear to be a flood on the horizon any time

Pioneer still packs its handsets with buttons



soon. DTS is ensconced with most of the major studios and has become the sound format of choice for BDs in the last few years. Of course, Dolby hopes to turn that around with Atmos (more through its awesome Atmos studio mastering tools than the Blu-ray potential) but it's going to be a slow burn.

However, there is overhead sound hope for us yet. Dolby has replaced many of its confusing iterations (Dolby Pro-Logic II etc) with a capture-all 'Dolby Surround' mode as part of the Atmos specification. This maps the native channels (two and up) from incoming sources onto your actual speaker configuration. Overhead channel information is processed virtually out of the incoming mix, so don't expect precision effects, but the mode does deliver an ambient and generally subtle effect with vanilla soundtracks, which works a treat in creating a more three-dimensional soundscape from any source. Having tried a few old 5.1 chestnuts, Dolby Surround mode became the default soundfield for action movies as it delivers a bit more immersion than native decoding. As noted it is subtle – unless you up the overhead channel levels a lot – but it will have you scanning back through your old DVD and Blu-ray collection to revisit old movies with a new sonic dimension.

Management consultant needed

So how does the Pioneer SC-LX88 actually sound? Well, it's a lively performer for sure, with crisp detailing and an up-front nature that delivers action movies with all the gusto they deserve. I struggled with bass management due to having something of a mish-mash of speakers in my 5.2.4 set up, each with very different LF output. The Pioneer only allows you to set a blanket crossover frequency for all speakers labelled small rather than individual channel crossovers. This means that the system (manually and automatic) sets the highest crossover required by any one speaker for all channels.

The issue is exacerbated by Atmos channels. Whether you use in-ceiling or up-firing Atmos speakers, neither design has very extended LF performance. In my case that meant the system crossed over to the subs at 100Hz, which rather defeated the benefit of my massive centre channel speaker with its three 8in bass drivers. As such, dialogue didn't have the absolute richness I have become used to. If you are using similar-sized speakers all round that issue will be something of a moot point.

And there is certainly nothing lightweight about the way the SC-LX88 handles bass. A lad's night in with back-to-back *Fast and*

The Pioneer's 11 speaker terminals support various system configurations



Furious movies proved a stomach-churning festival of LFE from end to end. Then, back down on planet subtle, the Pioneer's clarity shone through. On the Blu-ray of *Saving Mr Banks*, the dialogue-heavy drama came across superbly articulated and delivered with plenty of emotion. Emma Thompson's British accent and spectacularly haughty demeanour make for almost uncomfortable watching. You really feel for Walt Disney – and that's not a phrase I thought I would ever write.

A second USB input can be found on the front panel



With this movie, and less action-packed flicks generally, straight decoding was the preferred option. Adding the extra Dolby Surround virtual processing to height channels muddled the clarity of the mix a little, and didn't really add anything.

Where this Pioneer absolutely shines is with Dolby Atmos material. The Dolby Atmos *Leaf* trailer alone sells it. The falling sycamore seed (yeah, not a leaf at all) spins to the ground with a host of forest effects all around you, including overhead. It is clearly a rather gung-ho demonstration but jaw-dropping nonetheless, with the seed doing complete circuits of the room, sounding high and behind your seat as the image goes off screen. Visuals tied in with sound in the most immersive, believable and breathtaking way I have heard any home cinema format to date. The only caveat being that, when I heard this demo trailer in Dolby's domestic test room, with a 7.1.4 set-up, the effect was even more pronounced and believable.

Minor niggles and that lack of full 11-channel Dolby Atmos (and DTS Neo:X) processing aside, the Pioneer SC-LX88 would make an amazing hub for any modern home entertainment system. The competition here is tough, but this well-featured receiver has the talents to enter the fight ■

ON THE MENU



→ Pioneer's user interface remains a nicely-styled mix of clear text and natty graphics – although with Atmos now onboard, the speaker setup menus are more complex than they used to be...

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY TRUE HD: Yes. Plus nine-channel Dolby Atmos & Dolby Surround
DTS-HD MASTER AUDIO: Yes. Plus Neo:X
THX: No
MULTICHANNEL INPUT: Yes. 7.1-channel
MULTICHANNEL OUTPUT: Yes, 9.2 with 11.2 terminals
CLAIMED POWER OUTPUT: 9 x 220W (into 6 ohms)
MULTIROOM: Yes. 1 x HD audio/video zone; 3 x audio zones
HDMI: 8 x inputs (1 x MHL-compatible); 3 x outputs
COMPONENT VIDEO: 2 x inputs; 1 x output
AV INPUTS: 2 x digital optical; 2 x digital coaxial; 2 x AV composite
VIDEO UPSCALING: Yes. To 4K
DIMENSIONS: 435(w) x 441(d) x 185(h)mm
WEIGHT: 18.1kg
ALSO FEATURING: USB DAC with high-res audio support and 32-bit/192kHz upsampling; DLNA networking; Bluetooth apt-X; Apple AirPlay; Spotify Connect; tuned by AIR studios; learning remote; app control; Ethernet; Wi-Fi via supplied adapter; vTuner internet radio; 2 x USB inputs; 2 x 12V triggers; 2 x IR inputs; RS232; MCACC Pro automated setup; MM phono stage

HCC VERDICT



Pioneer SC-LX88

→ £2,200 Approx → www.pioneer.co.uk
→ Tel: 0330 123 1240

HIGHS: Fast and detailed sound; powerful; spectacular feature set; great control app; easy to setup and use; nice USB DAC

LOWS: Lacks the 11-channel Atmos processing of some rivals; limited bass management options

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

50 EPSON EH-TW6600W → Approx £1,700

Epson's latest mid-range home theatre projector comes equipped for every eventuality. **Steve May** eats popcorn, goes wireless

Vibrant projector makes dazzling debut



AV INFO

PRODUCT:
Full HD 3D LCD
projector

POSITION:
Upper mid-range
model, below the
EH-TW9200W

PEERS:
Sony VPL-HW40ES;
Optoma HD50



EPSON MAKES MUCH of the colour output of its 3LCD projection fleet, and often with good reason – most cast images which glow with *Candy Crush* vibrancy. The EH-TW6600W is a good example. This latest addition to its home theatre range creates images that compete with LED TVs in terms of kaleidoscopic vibrancy. With this PJ, superheroes appear more heroic and animations more animated. Sackcloth calibration miseries may not approve, but within minutes of installing the projector I was buzzing.

This mid-range model ships with Epson's clever wireless HDMI sender. If you don't need such a gizmo, it's also available without it for £300 less (the EH-TW6600). The projector sits above the high-brightness 720p EH-TW570 in Epson's new range, and replaces the outgoing EH-TW6100.

While this Full HD offering is clearly attractive for sports and gaming, it should be considered primarily a home theatre proposition. Installation is simplified with both vertical and horizontal lens shift, a generous +/- 60 per cent and 24 per cent respectively, plus electronic keystone correction. The projector is rated at 2,500 Lumens, which is bright enough for a passable viewing experience in a partially-lit living room; of course, the 250W UHE lamp is really quite dazzling in a light-controlled cinema or media den.

Epson rates contrast at 70,000:1. The projector handles dark scenes and gradations well, although it never quite goes ultra black. This doesn't diminish the power of its dynamics though, or the level of shadow detail available. When Longshot emerges from the swamp early into *Transformers: Age of Extinction* (Blu-ray, Chapter 3) to draw a bead on medical officer Rachet, every rivet and panel of his dark armour is clearly delineated. The moody battle gear of the mercenary Cemetery Wind squad is similarly defined. Yet the scene remains dark and dramatic.

The projector's Auto Iris can aid black level performance, but while the effects are subtle enough to negate any visual pumping, I still found its constant scratchy adjustment an audible irritant and eventually turned it off. As it happens, only minor noodling from the default settings is required to get a compelling balance between black level and shadow detail. Once nailed these settings can be saved into a memory slot, of which ten are available. All can be renamed and reloaded as required, ideal if you want maximum bling for *Strictly Come Dancing*, but something more Rec. 709 for movies.

The projector itself is fashionably

curvaceous, with a white gloss finish. The lens is slightly offset, with a hot air vent to the right and air intake panel on the side. The two lens shift dials are on the cabinet and have a rather clunky mechanical feel to them. A D-Pad and buttonry offer on-body control to those that choose to simply park their projector on a coffee table or similar.

Unusually for such a light-cannon, the EH-TW6600W features an integrated 2 x 10W sound system. Typically these are the provision of sub-£1K projectors. Out of the box, I found the audio level high and even though nothing was connected the speakers were making an unpleasant whistling noise; I had to knock the volume back to zero to cure it.

The remote offers all the key controls, so much so you probably won't need to navigate the menus too often, and it's helpfully backlit, too. The UI itself is unremarkable in that it looks pretty much like every other Epson projector menu since the dawn of time.

Rear-panel connections include a pair of HDMI inputs, a PC VGA input, component video, composite, USB and stereo audio. There's also a 12V trigger, which allows the projector to be easily synced with a ceiling-mounted screen, and RS232 control port. For my evaluation, I ceiling-mounted the unit, using the standard rear-plate fixing points. From a distance of just over 4m I could comfortably fill a 110in screen. Focus and zoom are manually adjusted.

There's a wide variety of picture presets available, including Living Room, Natural Cinema, 3D Dynamic, 3D Cinema and Dynamic. The latter is like being squirted in the eyes with lemon juice. The best option, >

The wireless HD transmitter also doubles as a local HDMI switcher. Handy

The EH-TW6600W sports a smart, lounge-friendly design



both in terms of tonal balance and overall usability, is Cinema. In this mode the projector defaults to its Eco lamp setting which significantly reduces fan noise. In truth, I wouldn't want to run the projector in anything other than Eco, as the standard operational noise is high at 36dB. Even here, it's not exactly silent-running at 23dB, but you can at least mask it successfully with a cinema sound system.

There's a variety of calibration options offered, not all intuitive. Epson Super White actually proves duller than the default. The

'A thoroughly entertaining home cinema PJ – easy to set up and well-featured for the price'

Super Resolution and Detail Enhancement modes don't penalize and so are worth experimenting with. The former adds a level of edge emphasis while Detail Enhancement draws out texture. The newly-remastered *Re-Animator* (Blu-ray) proves an interesting challenge for the EH-TW6600W's picture processing. The disc features a high level of pixel noise, which Super Resolution exaggerates. It transpires that what works well for *Transformers: Age of Extinction* isn't right for budget schlockers.

Motion resolution is limited to around 700 lines, and there are no high-speed interpolation modes to improve this. For movies, this really shouldn't prove much of an issue. The overall character of the image is definitely cinematic.

Cutting the cable

Epson's HDMI switcher/transmitter is an intriguing addition. It has five inputs for all your sources, and, as well as its wireless output,

another one for a local display device. It even supports MHL and has a USB port to charge 3D goggles. Audio from a transmitted source is routed through to the projector's speakers.

There's no dongle required, as a WiHD receiver is built-in. You need only ensure that the switcher is facing the EH-TW6600W and has line of sight. A link indicator on the transmitter illuminates to confirm a successful connection. Full HD image quality is seemingly undiminished by its journey through the ether.

The projector supports Active 3D, compatible with the 3D RF standard. It ships with a single pair of glasses, but your retailer may well offer more to keep you sweet. Its 3D performance is rather compelling. The menu for Disney's *Tangled* presents a night sky of lanterns that is largely free from double imaging crosstalk. There are artefacts though, as the 480MHz refresh rate seemingly conspires to trip up your eyeballs, but overall it's not too bad.

There are two 3D presets, Dynamic and Cinema, and while both as standard cause the fan to accelerate, you can force the projector into the quieter Eco mode. There's some loss of brightness as a consequence, but the viewing experience is definitely better.

Terrific value

Overall, I consider the Epson EH-TW6600W a thoroughly entertaining home cinema projector. It's easy to set up and well-specified for the £1,700 price – without the HDMI wireless transmitter it represents particularly terrific value, so check to see if you can run a cable from your AV receiver to the PJ before splashing out. And boasting rich hues and big dynamics, it makes the most of a wide variety of content.

Its main competition is the more affordable Optoma HD50, which isn't as well built, and the more expensive Sony VPL-HW40ES which lacks a 12V trigger. Consequently, it comes highly recommended ■

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: Yes. Active

4K: No. 1,920 x 1,080

CONNECTIONS: 2 x HDMI inputs; PC VGA input; component video input; composite video input; stereo audio input; 12V trigger, RS232 control port; USB

BRIGHTNESS (CLAIMED): 2,500 Lumens

CONTRAST (CLAIMED): 70,000:1

DIMENSIONS: 410(w) x 304(h) x 157(d)mm

WEIGHT: 6.8kg

FEATURES: 3LCD projector (0.61in C2 Fine panels); built-in 2 x 10W audio; 250W lamp; 5,000-hour claimed lamp life in Eco mode, 3,500 hours otherwise; 36dB fan noise/23dB in Eco mode; 1.32-2.15:1 throw ratio; 1.6x zoom; vertical (+/- 60%) and horizontal (+/- 24%) lens shift; vertical and horizontal keystone correction; WiHD wireless HDMI switcher/transmitter; Auto, Dynamic, Living room, Natural, and Cinema modes (2D); Dynamic and Cinema modes (3D); Super Resolution and Detail Enhancement modes

HCC VERDICT



Epson EH-TW6600W

→ £1,700 Approx → www.epson.co.uk

→ Tel: 01952 607 111

HIGHS: Colour-rich and dynamic images; effective wireless HDMI transmitter/switcher; low-crosstalk 3D performance; decent zoom and lens shift options

LOWS: Not the quietest projector around; scratchy Auto Iris; limited motion resolution

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



WHAT HI-FI?
AWARDS 2014

Speaker packages
Best style package £1400-£1800
Monitor Audio Radius R90HT1

**BEST STYLE SPEAKER
PACKAGE £1400-£1800**

R90HT1 What Hi-Fi? Awards October 2014

WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION
WHATHIFI.COM



HEAD TURNING ROOM FILLING AWARD WINNING

The original style speaker package just gets better. Expertly tuned to deliver the full-frequency impact of today's high definition soundtracks, the R90HT1 blends compact lifestyle design and easy-to-install versatility with the immersive audio quality that all home cinema enthusiasts crave.



October 2013



December 2013



February 2014

54 DENON AVR-X4100W → Approx £1,300

'This AV receiver isn't a challenge to drive – Denon has made huge improvements to overall usability'



AV INFO

PRODUCT:
Seven-channel
Atmos receiver

POSITIONING:
Above the
non-Atmos X3100W.
Below the X5200W

PEERS:
Onkyo TX-NR838;
Yamaha RX-A2040



This Denon AVR supports Atmos, and has an eye on Auro-3D. Old-timer **Steve May** tries to keep up

Next-generation audio evangelist

A CURSORY GLANCE might suggest that the AVR-X4100W looks pretty much like any other receiver released from the Denon stable over the past decade. However, that notion couldn't be further from the truth. While the basic form factor promises comfy familiarity, everything from feature set to UI has been dramatically overhauled. This is an AVR ripped from the science labs of tomorrow, an AV hub in a Starfleet uniform.

The AVR-X4100W is Dolby Atmos-capable out of the box, and by the end of the year you'll be able to buy a firmware upgrade for rival format Auro-3D. There's also DTS Neo:X and Audyssey DSX height and width processing on board, but such vintage trickery probably has little appeal to the AV youth of today.

Despite its inherent complexity, this whizz-bang box isn't that challenging to drive. Denon has made massive improvements to overall usability. The quirks and niggles of old-school receivers are (largely) notable only by their absence.

A Setup Assistant guides you through every aspect of installation. With clear graphical images and uncomplicated instructions, it takes away much of the pain normally associated with a home cinema installation. It illustrates speaker positions and configs, and even offers a top-down view of where you should plonk the Audyssey setup microphone. During playback, an info screen helpfully reveals what's incoming in terms of source material and how the AVR is dealing with it.

This amp supports Apple AirPlay and Bluetooth, and boasts integrated Wi-Fi too. Such convenience is not to be sniffed at.

The receiver has seven rear-facing HDMI inputs, plus an additional fascia input and three outputs for screen, projector and second zone. All input sources can be scaled to 4K resolution if required. HDMI 2.0 support implies compatibility with 4K/UHD up to 60Hz; the AVR-X4100W is also cool with 4:4:4 chroma

Denon's remote avoids the button overload of some rival zappers



subsampling. In truth it's unlikely that we'll see any content in the short term which employs 4:4:4, with 4:2:0 widely thought to be the standard up for adoption by 4K Blu-ray and broadcasters, but it's good to know Denon is thinking ahead. The only fly in the ointment is the lack of HDCP 2.2 copy protection. Quite what the ramifications of this will be are yet to be determined. It might be no big deal. I had a recent chat with Sony engineers on the topic who seemed to conclude that as long as the source and display device could handshake it didn't much matter what was in between, as long it allowed a clear passthrough.

The AVR-X4100W is a seven-channel design, with the option of nine-channel processing via additional stereo amplification. Typically, users will choose either an Atmos 5.1.2 speaker layout, or a traditional seven-channel surround one. Power output is rated at 7 x 125W into 8 ohms.

Network services are currently limited to internet radio and Flickr, although media player functionality is broad. The AVR will stream DSD 2.8MHz, as well as AIFF, WAV and FLAC up to 192kHz, and MP3, WMA and ALAC.

Getting set up

Audyssey MultEQ XT32 auto calibration allows multiple listening points to be balanced. This can't be dodged as it's essential to assigning Dolby Atmos attributes. Thankfully the algorithm does a reasonably good job. Post-calibration, some minor level adjustment >



was required to bring all my speakers to an even SPL, and then some fiddling with crossovers to get a better tonal balance (Audyssey may be smart but it doesn't actually know what my speakers sound like).

Denon still has work to do with its speaker UI, though. As part of the setup routine you need to pre-select the configuration of your receiver in the Amp Assign menu. This offers the option of mandating a Dolby Atmos or seven-channel layout. Counterintuitively, the dedicated Atmos setting currently does not support Dolby Atmos-enabled upfiring speakers, offering only in-ceiling options (two or four). While this mode will pump an Atmos FX channel out of any speaker, it does so

'Deeply immersive in Atmos guise, yet capable of unplugged grace with hi-res audio sources'

without the reflective Dolby notch filtering used to create the illusion of above-the-head audio. Consequently, it should only be used if your theatre has physical ceiling speakers. Dolby-enabled speakers, however, are supported when you opt for the seven-channel layout. This mode will also recognise an Atmos bitstream. Denon says it will resolve confusion through a firmware update in due course.

For my Atmos workout, I partnered the AVR with sister brand Definitive Technology's A60 reflecting speakers (or Elevation modules, as Def Tech refers to them). Priced at £400 per pair, they're currently the largest dedicated upfiring speakers available, but ingeniously dock on top of Def Tech's floorstanding (and beautiful) BP8060s (£1,700 per pair). Cosmetically the result looks like one homogeneous floorstander. My still limited Atmos content selection comprises Dolby's trailer selection and *Transformers: Age of Extinction*.

The AVR-X4100W is nothing if not short of power. At reference level it grabs your listening

Before the year's out, Denon's AVR-X4100W will add support for Auro-3D via a paid-for firmware upgrade

room like a deranged Decepticon and shakes it until everything rattles. But this receiver is also fast and dynamic, making for a terrifically exciting listen. The soundmix of *Transformers* is thunderously complex, yet the AVR-X4100W keeps track of the destruction, with pin-point image placement and excellent mid-range delineation. And fed calmer fare it can sound almost lyrical. Dolby's Atmos trailers, with birdsong, insects and tropical rain, all sound eerily naturalistic.

Given the paucity of Atmos content, it's just as well that the AVR-X4100W's upmix function can be used with any multichannel source. This is more unpredictable but worth consideration; Atmos post-processing adds a sense of ambience and scale to 5.1, particularly TV material like *The Walking Dead*, where it brings the Walkers that bit closer to biting distance.

At times the AVR-X4100W can seem a little heavy-handed, particularly when it comes to fine top-down detail; tiny elements in the mix can be obscured. The jungle canopy in Dolby's *Amaze* trailer sounds a little denser than when I heard it through Onkyo's TX-NR838.

That said, this receiver is exceptionally smooth. This becomes apparent when taken out of Atmos territory and reconfigured into a seven-channel horizontal layout. The futuristic panning that characterises sci-fi actioner *Oblivion* is slick. Indeed, there's an authority of presence about the soundfield that hints of genuinely high-end performance, and at times I actually preferred the rear-back array. Unfortunately, amp and speaker topography doesn't allow both layouts to be serviced at the same time. There are separate speaker terminals for (Atmos) height, rear back and front width speakers.

Overall, the AVR-X4100W is a first-rate AV receiver. It's brilliantly equipped, deeply immersive in Atmos guise, yet capable of unplugged grace with high-resolution audio sources. For enthusiasts waiting to jump onboard the 3D audio bandwagon, it's a mighty tempting upgrade ■

ON THE MENU



→ Installation of the AVR-X4100W is aided by Denon's simple menus and a Setup Assistant. Graphically, it's not awe-inspiring, but it's not ugly either

SPECIFICATIONS

DOLBY TRUE HD: Yes. Plus seven-channel Dolby Atmos & Dolby Surround
DTS-HD MASTER AUDIO: Yes. Plus Neo: X
THX: No
MULTICHANNEL INPUT: No
MULTICHANNEL OUTPUT: Yes. 9.2-channel processing
CLAIMED POWER OUTPUT: 7 x 125W (into 8 ohms)
MULTIROOM: Yes. Zones 2 & 3
HDMI: 8 x inputs; 3 x outputs
COMPONENT VIDEO: 2 x inputs; 1 x output
AV INPUTS: 3 x composite; 5 x digital audio (2 x optical, 2 x coaxial, 1 x Denon HD Link)
VIDEO UPSCALING: Yes. To 4K
DIMENSIONS: 434(w) x 389(d) x 167(h)mm
WEIGHT: 12.6kg
ALSO FEATURING: Integrated Bluetooth and Wi-Fi (2.4GHz); Apple OS and Android control apps; iOS wireless sharing; Audyssey MultEQ XT32 room EQ with LFC and DSX processing; audio file playback (FLAC, WAV, AIFF, ALAC, DSD, MP3, WMA); Windows 8 certified; DLNA certified; Spotify Connect; vTuner 'net radio; Ethernet; 2 x USB; Apple AirPlay; 12V trigger; AM/FM Tuner

HCC VERDICT



Denon AVR-X4100W

→ £1,300 Approx → www.denon.co.uk
 → Tel: 0289 0279 830

HIGHS: Vigorous, exciting multichannel performance; integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth; generous HDMI provision

LOWS: Can sound heavy-handed; kinks to work out of the Dolby Atmos setup; no THX post-processing on offer

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

SERIE S

HEAR WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING



Featuring the Serie S flagship S/5 with 12" Continuous Cast™ cone bass engine.

Visit rel.net to learn more about REL and find an authorized dealer near you.



“REL MAKES **SUPERB ACTIVE SUBWOOFERS** IN GENERAL AND THIS ONE IS **SO GOOD**, IT IS PEER TO AT LEAST ONE 15IN MODEL AND OTHER PRODUCTS NEARLY TWICE THE PRICE. IN THE S5, **DRIVER AND AMPLIFIER ENGINEERING** HAVE CREATED A **NEW BENCHMARK**.” | ADAM RAYNER, HOME CINEMA CHOICE

www.rel.net REL. Accept No Substitutes.

Home cinema

Which sort of visual system do you go for? Projector and screen, or plasma, LCD or LED TV? 3D or non-3D?

Choosing a home cinema system is a potential minefield that must be negotiated with great care or safely avoided by letting experts guide you. If you want to end up with a system that, as a minimum, meets your expectations in terms of picture and sound quality, reading magazine product reviews and choosing the recommendations, five-star favourites or best buys can only ever be part of the answer at best. Looking for the cheapest price and having a system delivered to your door, even with a 'knowledgeable' friend to help set it up, is a well-trodden path to disappointment.

There is a bewildering choice of components on the market today and also different ways in which components can be installed and connected together. Which sort of visual system do you go for? Projector and screen, or plasma, LCD or LED TV? 3D or non-3D? Full 1080p capability is now the only sensible choice but the appropriate source components, such as a Blu-ray player, need to be part of the equation.

The sound performance of a system is also hugely important, even more so if you will be listening to music, or music DVD's, through the same system. If so, you need an amp that approaches the performance

of a decent 2-channel hi-fi amp, which is not that easy to find. Having an amp with the right inputs for the best connectivity is essential but you will also need to decide on a 5.1 or 7.1 speaker system, passive or active sub and, crucially, where they will be sited for the best results. In short, it's complicated and very fertile ground for getting it wrong.

Achieving potential

To select a system, you could choose a collection of 'Best Buy' components in the hope that they will be a great combination. Maybe, but probably not. You could buy a pre-packaged all-in-one system from one manufacturer. This is almost certainly not the best route either, as you will miss out on enormous potential. From informal surveys conducted, it appears highly likely that the majority of home cinema systems

selected and installed on a DIY basis (that is without professional input) are performing at way below their optimum level. To compound matters, most are also ill-matched to the room in which they are installed and are, in reality, the wrong system. Without considerable knowledge or experience, high quality home cinema is not a suitable DIY activity. Our aim must be to buy a home cinema system that will provide an excellent picture quality plus an audio delivery that will match, or even better, the commercial cinema experience. It must be exciting, reliable and deliver true value for money.

“ Home cinema
so good you'll believe
you're there! ”



Selecting and installing
home cinema on a
DIY basis may leave
the system performing
at way below its
optimum level.

Confused ?

What and Where to buy

To ensure a home cinema system is right for you, where do you start? Here's an important tip ...don't start with WHAT, start with WHERE. There's only one way to give yourself the best chance of getting it right first time, and that's through a specialist AV dealer. It's possible you have preconceived ideas that put you off visiting one. Although you would welcome the advice and guidance, you don't know the technical jargon. You don't want to be talked down to. Your friend has said they only sell expensive gear and they're not interested if you don't have a big budget. They're expensive. These are just myths.

Most specialist AV dealers are running their business because, above all, home cinema is their hobby. They spend a large portion of their time comparing systems to get the best possible results. They know the component combinations which don't gel together and, conversely, they know the combinations which give the best performance within a given price range. Very importantly, they know how to get a system working to its optimum. But they all also know the system must suit you.

Buying or being sold to

There are dealers around, web based or otherwise, who will sell you anything you are willing to pay for. They may be a bit cheaper but that's all they offer. Now there's a carefully selected group of long-established specialist dealers who are totally committed to putting the customer first. Their idea of 'selling' is to discuss your requirements, offer their advice, give you the best options, then play the systems for you and allow you to be the judge. You'll probably be surprised and, almost certainly, relieved to discover how easy it is to see and hear the differences between components and between systems. You'll be able to make a clear and informed decision about what to buy.

The story doesn't end there. These shops won't abandon you once you've put your hand in your pocket. They won't leave you to set up the system you've selected as best you can. They'll install it in your home, make sure it performs to its best, and ensure you're entirely happy with the way it works. Why? Because a high proportion of these dealers' custom comes through people who have bought from them before, either directly or by recommendation. It's vital to them to get it right for you.

Getting the best deal

Unless you've got money to burn, you'll be living with your new system for years. Most of these dealers offer much longer equipment guarantees than provided by the manufacturer, a very worthwhile benefit, but it also makes it in the dealer's interest to ensure high build quality and reliability. Maybe you could save a few pounds by buying piecemeal but you'll lose out on the overall package. As far as the dealers are concerned, they believe that taking care of their customers properly is a far better way of doing business than just handing over boxes.



The Dealers listed below have been selected because they are known to do an excellent job in guiding customers towards home cinema systems that will provide years of superlative performance and total satisfaction.

Our Top20 AV shops in the country

SOUTH

Chelmsford

RAYLEIGH HI-FI SOUND & VISION

216 Moulsham Street. 01245 265245
www.rayleighhifi.com

Kingston-upon-Thames

INFIDELITY

9 High Street, Hampton Wick.
020 8943 3530
www.infidelity.co.uk

Maidenhead

AUDIO VENUE

36 Queen Street. 01628 633995
www.audiovenue.com

Norwich

MARTINS HI-FI

85-91 Ber Street. 01603 627134
www.martinshifi.co.uk

Rayleigh, Essex

RAYLEIGH HI-FI SOUND & VISION

44a High Street. 01268 779762

CUSTOM INSTALL DEPT.

01268 776932
www.rayleighhifi.com

Southend-on-Sea

RAYLEIGH HI-FI SOUND & VISION

132/4 London Road. 01702 435255
www.rayleighhifi.com

Tunbridge Wells

KENT HOME CINEMA

69 London Road, Southborough.
01892 535007
www.kenthomecinema.co.uk

LONDON

Ealing

AUDIO VENUE

27 Bond Street. 020 8567 8703
www.audiovenue.com

N1 GRAHAMS HI-FI

190a New North Road. 020 7226 5500
www.grahams.co.uk

SW11 ORANGES & LEMONS

61-63 Webbs Road, Battersea.
020 7924 2040
www.oandlhifi.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Coventry

FRANK HARVEY HI-FI EXCELLENCE

163 Spon Street. 024 7652 5200
www.frankharvey.co.uk

Nottingham

CASTLE SOUND & VISION

48/50 Maid Marian Way.
0115 9584404
www.castlesoundvision.com

Solihull

MUSIC MATTERS

93-95 Hobs Moat Road.
0121 742 0254
www.musicmatters.co.uk

NORTH

York

SOUND ORGANISATION

2 Gillygate.
01904 627108
www.soundorg.co.uk



The majority of the above dealers are members of one or both of the major trade organisations, BADA or CEDIA.

www.top20uk.info



STAR QUALITIES

VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★
SERVICE ★★★★★
FACILITIES ★★★★★
VERDICT ★★★★★

...Talk to the experts

Cue the music...



Q Acoustics.

Media 4 The real hi-fi soundbar



Sonic wizardry for music and movies

With its 100w amplifier and built-in subwoofer, the Media 4 plays music, TV sound and movies with astonishing quality - no extra boxes required!

Simply plug and play - plus wirelessly connect smartphones, tablets and laptops using aptX Bluetooth.

Wall mounts with built-in bracket or shelf-mount with supplied anti-vibration feet.

www.Qacoustics.co.uk



What Hi-Fi? Awards 2014,
'Product of the Year'



Trusted Reviews 'Recommended',
October 2014



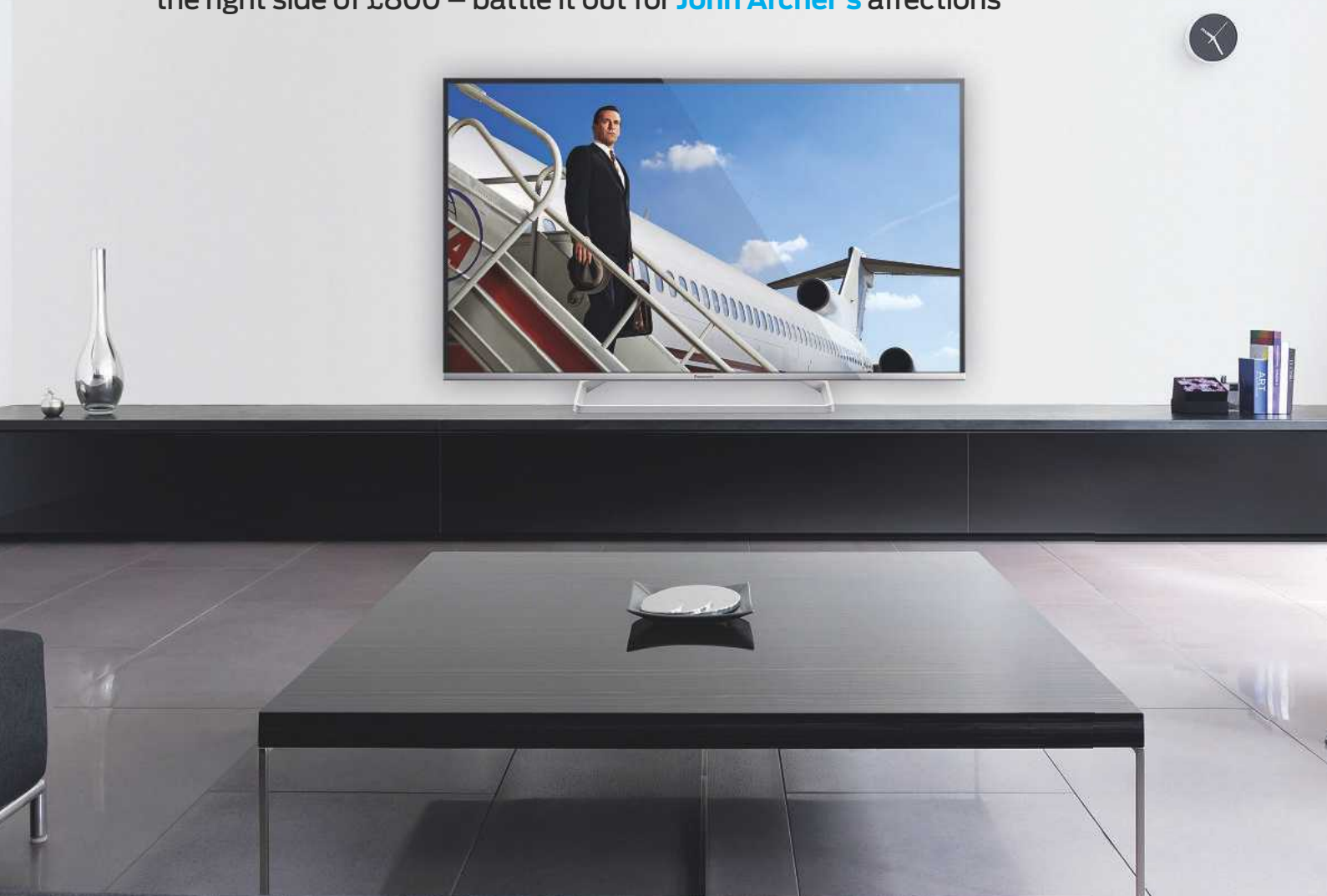
AV Forums 'Highly Recommended',
July 2014



Home Cinema Choice 'Best Buy',
July 2014

47/48in TV group test

A foursome of Full HD flatscreens – high-spec but all priced on the right side of £800 – battle it out for **John Archer's** affections



LG 47LB730VT

WebOS Smart TV using Passive 3D technology

PANASONIC TX-48AS640

Hexa processing and Freetime are on the menu

PHILIPS 48PFT5509

Just £500 – but is there a catch?

SAMSUNG UE48H6400

Active 3D with plenty of catch-up/VOD

LG 47LB730V

This 47in model claims a price hike over its rivals – does it justify it?

PASSIVE ATTITUDE

3D BDs take a detail hit, but crosstalk is negligible



THE 47LB730V IS, at the time of writing, the most expensive TV in this group test – so it's got a point to prove. It sets about this task with gusto, though, thanks to a seriously pretty design that mixes an ultra-slim frame with a posh-looking silvery outer trim. The aluminium stand hasn't exactly been beaten with the ugly stick, either.

Connections are solid, with highlights of three HDMI, an RS232 for system integration/control, three USBs and Ethernet/Wi-Fi network options. A fourth HDMI might have been nice, but the TV still feels über-busy in content terms thanks to its sublime WebOS-driven Smart interface. This revolutionises the Smart TV world thanks to its beautiful presentation, logical organisation and friendly menu system; unprecedented multi-tasking achieved by treating everything – including each HDMI – as its own 'app'; and superb 'point and click' Magic Motion remote control.

In ease of use terms it's definitely the Smart interface to beat.

Picture potency

The 47LB730V is well stocked with picture features. It claims an 800Hz-like motion handling system (though the panel's native refresh rate is only 100Hz), and there are plenty of image adjustments, including white balance, gamma and colour management.

The single most important feature, though, is the local dimming engine for outputting different light levels from different clusters of its edge LED lights. Setting the local dimming

up correctly is fundamental to how good the 47LB730V's pictures look. Leave it off completely and dark scenes appear grey and washed out. Yet set it too high and you'll see numerous squares and rectangles of light around bright objects when they're against dark backgrounds. I'd suggest you stick with the local dimming's '1' setting, and avoid the others.

Even using this setting, though, the LG's black level consistency and depth is outgunned by its rivals – especially when you're watching dark widescreen scenes with black bars above and below. Which many film fans routinely do, of course.

In other ways the 47LB730V is strong. Colours look exuberant with richly saturated films like *Kill Bill*, delivering real pop to objects, like the truck The Bride steals after escaping hospital and her famous yellow jump suit. Yet it can also make tones look nicely balanced and believable without having to sacrifice too much vibrancy.

There's plenty of sharpness with HD too, and while a little of this impressive clarity is lost when there's a lot of motion, such as during Tom Cruise's many failed attempts to survive the battlefield in *Edge of Tomorrow*, LG's motion processing does suppress judder well without causing too many processing glitches – so long as you avoid the upper echelons of the motion processing system.

Using an IPS-type LCD panel means the 47LB730V supports a wide viewing angle, although this advantage isn't as pronounced

as it used to be thanks to improvements in rival VA panels.

The 47LB730V carries 3D playback, using LG's Passive system. And it works superbly, delivering huge-scale 3D images with zero crosstalk ghosting, rich colours and good motion handling. There's a little jaggedness around some curved/rounded objects and slightly less detail than you get with good Active 3D TVs, but 3D pictures are never less than a fun and, crucially, relaxing watch.

Despite the slim frame, the 47LB730V sounds good. Its speakers cope with the brilliant treble detail and bass excesses of *Edge Of Tomorrow*, while the mid-range remains open enough to keep dialogue clear and credible.

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: Yes, Passive
4K: No, 1,920 x 1,080
TUNER: Yes, Freeview
CONNECTIONS: 3 x HDMI; 3 x USB; RF input; RGB Scart; composite video; component video; PCMCIA; RS232; Wi-Fi; Ethernet; optical digital audio output; headphone jack
SOUND: 2 x 12W
BRIGHTNESS (CLAIMED): N/A
CONTRAST RATIO (CLAIMED): N/A
DIMENSIONS (OFF STAND): 1,061(w) x 623(h) x 55.1(d)mm
WEIGHT (OFF STAND): 12.8kg
FEATURES: WebOS operating system; 'Bean Bird'-assisted installation; Now TV support; multimedia playback via USB or DLNA; 800Hz motion emulation; Triple XD Engine; local dimming adjustment

Panasonic TX-48AS640

Offering sensible Smart features and well-balanced visuals, this is a fine flatscreen



PANASONIC'S TX-48AS640 CUTS a similar figure on your AV furniture as its LG competitor, with a bezel that combines silver top and bottom edges with thin black sides to striking effect. Connectivity is similar too, with three HDMI, two USBs and both Ethernet and Wi-Fi network options.

The features made possible by these network options are prodigious. Highlights are the Freetime catchup TV system (where you can scroll back through the TV listings as well as forwards to find and access on-demand shows you've missed) and TV Anywhere, whereby you can access your TV's tuner broadcasts and USB recordings over the internet no matter where in the world you are.

Implementing Freetime has helped Panasonic become only the second brand (after Samsung) to offer the catch-up TV services of all the five main terrestrial broadcast channels.

The TX-48AS640's image talents include: 3D playback (using the Full HD Active system); a claimed 1,200Hz-emulating motion processing engine; a fairly comprehensive suite of picture calibration tools; and Panasonic's powerful Hexa picture processing engine. Also, the TX-48AS640 uses a VA-style panel rather than an IPS one, raising hopes of a strong contrast...

Black magic

And so it proves. The TX-48AS640 copes very well indeed with dark content, like *Kill Bill*'s 'buried alive' sequence. It's much more

successful in this regard than the LG, delivering deeper black colours while largely avoiding backlight clouds and blocks. This immediately makes for a more cinematically immersive viewing experience and greater consistency between bright and dark scenes.

Good black levels typically lead to natural colours – and the TX-48AS640 delivers *Kill Bill*'s animated sequences with gaudy, gory aplomb while also efficiently handling naturalistic tones, like the skin tones on show in the desert sequences in *Captain Phillips*. Colour blends are delivered well, generally avoiding any striping and blockiness.

The TX-48AS640's HD pictures are marked by acute sharpness and high detail levels, and this extreme clarity isn't accompanied by exaggerated graininess or over-cooked, haloed object edges. Furthermore, the TX-48AS640's eye-catching clarity doesn't drop off particularly badly when there's fast motion to cope with, such as during *Edge Of Tomorrow*'s swirling alien attacks. The brand's Intelligent Frame Creation motion processing system can be comfortably employed without the creation of hideous side effects.

The only issues I have with this screen's 2D pictures are that you have to keep the backlight set lower than you might feel ideal to steer clear of backlight clouding in the screen's corners; that the set's effective viewing angle is quite limited; and that standard-definition fare lacks a little colour lustre and crispness.

Stereoscopic pictures are okay. There's plenty of detail in top-drawer 3D transfers like

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: Yes. Active

4K: No. 1,920 x 1,080

TUNER: Yes. Freeview

CONNECTIONS: 3 x HDMI; 2 x USB; RF input; RGB Scart; optical digital audio output; composite video; component video; CI slot; Wi-Fi; Ethernet; headphone port

SOUND: 2 x 12W

BRIGHTNESS (CLAIMED): N/A

CONTRAST RATIO (CLAIMED): N/A

DIMENSIONS (OFF STAND): 1,087(w) x 632(h) x 57(d)mm

WEIGHT (OFF STAND): 14kg

FEATURES: My Home Screen operating system; Freetime catch-up TV platform; multimedia playback via USB or DLNA; 1,200Hz motion emulation; Hexa processing engine

Oz: The Great and Powerful and *Hugo*, and it's good to see that 3D visuals don't lose much brightness or colour vibrancy (something that has traditionally been an issue with Panasonic's 3D TVs). However, the TX-48AS640 is more susceptible to crosstalk ghosting and flickering than some rivals, and darker 3D sequences can exhibit minor backlight clouding.

Sonically this 48-incher is no better than average. The 24W stereo speaker array tucked into its elegant design lacks the bass range and power to convince with explosive action movies like *Edge of Tomorrow*.

Yet the TX-48AS640 does enough with its picture quality and smart features to still stand as one of the year's most attractive mid-range TV options. >

Philips 48PFT5509

This set may ditch the brand's Ambilight light show, but it certainly saves you money



DIGITAL DEARTH
The TV packs only two HDMI inputs. Is that enough for you?

A 48IN FULL HD Smart TV, Philips' 48PFT5509 rides into town waving a £500 ticket in the face of potential cash-conscious buyers, undercutting its nearest-priced rival in this group test by about £100.

Its affordable nature isn't obvious from its design. The frame is on-trend slim, and the open metal stand mirrors much of the competition, too. You don't, however, get Philips' Ambilight technology, but I suppose this is a logical enough sacrifice in targeting that £500 mark.

Something else that's had to give is HDMI provision. There are only two inputs here – ideally even a budget set would have three. But you do get dual USBs, plus wired and wireless network options that support either DLNA playback from networked devices or access to Philips' Smart TV system.

This is a 'b-list' affair, thanks to a lack of content (Amazon Instant, Demand 5, 4OD and the ITV Player are noticeable by their absence) and a lack of features (its 'learning' abilities are half-cooked to say the least).

Picture features include a 200Hz-emulating system achieved by using backlight scanning with a native 50Hz panel; micro dimming technology that breaks the image down into multiple segments for more accurate analysis and a degree of local optimisation; and Pixel Plus HD processing. The latter is fairly old, having been superseded by at least two newer iterations. Yet that's not to say it's incapable of boosting picture quality, especially, experience suggests, in the sharpness department.

Perhaps the biggest compromise Philips has elected to make with the 48PFT5509 to keep it affordable is to not offer 3D.

Standing up to be counted

Performance is decent – this isn't a bargain-bin screen by any stretch of the imagination. Contrast levels in particular impress, with the set achieving deeper, richer blacks than I was prepared for, while HD sources are displayed with ruthless sharpness. Detail levels in pristine sequences, like those in the combat training hall in *Edge of Tomorrow*, are very high, and pictures sometimes appear so sharp you might imagine you're looking at a resolution higher than Full HD.

This combination of stygian blacks and cutting sharpness helps the 48PFT5509 with its colours. My *Captain Philips* Blu-ray comes through with levels of blend finesse well beyond some £500 screens, and Philips' Pixel Plus processing boosts colour and sharpness without invoking as many irksome side effects (such as motion haloing and dot crawl) as I've witnessed with older generations of the system.

There are areas where the 48PFT5509's affordable nature sneaks into view. Standard-definition material isn't upscaled very well to the TV's Full HD resolution, for instance, ending up looking a bit messy and simplistically coloured. Sticking to an HD diet is therefore recommended – especially as shadow detail curiously takes a hit with standard-def viewing.

Additionally, sharpness levels with HD can look over the top using the TV's presets, leading to graininess and harshness until you take the Super Resolution feature down a few notches. At the same time, *Kill Bill*'s action sequences reveal a reduction in sharpness over fast-moving objects.

Still, the 48PFT5509 generally performs admirably, and its image talents are joined by a healthy sound quality. A woofer on its rear helps it produce noticeable low frequencies, and makes it easier for its other speakers to produce an open-sounding and clear mid-range. There's not much treble detail, but at least what treble information there is doesn't sound harsh.

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: No
4K: No, 1,920 x 1,080
TUNER: Yes. Freeview
CONNECTIONS: 2 x HDMI; 2 x USB; RF input; RGB Scart; composite video; component video; CI slot; RS232; Wi-Fi; Ethernet; optical digital audio; stereo phono audio; headphone port
SOUND: 20W RMS
BRIGHTNESS (CLAIMED): 350cd/m2
CONTRAST RATIO (CLAIMED): N/A
DIMENSIONS (OFF STAND): 1,082(w) x 625(h) x 57(d)mm
WEIGHT (OFF STAND): 11kg
FEATURES: Smart TV system; Pixel Plus HD processing; Super Resolution; multimedia playback via USB or DLNA; 200Hz motion emulation (50Hz native panel plus backlight scanning); micro dimming; built-in subwoofer



Ahead of the Curve®

"True supersub performance in a handsome package"

- Jeff Fritz, SoundStage! Network (October, 2013)

introducing the all-new E-Sub™ powered subwoofer



e110
10-inch driver
1200 watts



e112
12-inch driver
1500 watts

Presenting the latest JL Audio powered subwoofer design, packed with new technology... from a radically designed, extreme-excursion driver, to an amazingly efficient and powerful amplifier.

Unleash it in your system and discover the magic of a truly exceptional subwoofer.



Authorised Dealers: Audio Venue (Ealing) - 0208 5678703
Audio Venue (Maidenhead) - 01628 633995

Ideal-AV - 01924 781011
JS Audio - 0208 4059043

Musicraft (Derby) - 01332 346284
Swiss Cottage AV - 0207 7229560

www.av-techsolutions.co.uk

Samsung UE48H6400

Yet again the Korean giant barely puts a flatscreen foot wrong

LOVE HERTZ

Samsung's screen claims a 400Hz motion rate



ALTHOUGH UNDERCUT IN this group test by the welcome £500 price of the Philips 48PFT5509, Samsung's UE48H6400 is still stunning value.

The design, while not especially original – the X-shaped stand seems a bit dated – is still attractive, with a glossy inner bezel and see-through outer frame. And the Samsung scores points over its rivals by providing four HDMI inputs, joined by copious multimedia support in the shape of three USBs and Ethernet and Wi-Fi hookups.

Samsung's Smart TV platform is excellent, providing an impressive array of video streaming apps, including catch-up services for all the UK's terrestrial broadcasters, plus Netflix and Amazon Instant. There's also a highly-developed content recommendation system based on continual analysis of your viewing habits. Samsung could do with streamlining its Smart interface a little, but content-wise it can't be beat.

Picture obsessives can indulge in a fulsome set of image adjustments, including colour and white balance management. Other key features include a 100Hz screen backed up by processing and backlight scanning to emulate a 400Hz effect, and Samsung's Micro Dimming technology to enable accurate processing results.

The UE48H6400 provides Active 3D playback, complete with two pairs of glasses.

Take the time to reduce the backlight to its 8 or 9 level when watching films, and the Samsung is capable of pumping out some

outstanding pictures for its money. Colours are exceptionally appealing, with a richness that never leads to a loss of tonal balance or blend subtlety. I fed it the card game sequences in *Casino Royale*, which contain difficult to handle, diffuse colour tones, and it didn't falter.

The UE48H6400 handles dark scenes astutely once you've reduced the backlight. Panasonic's TX-48AS640 goes slightly deeper with its black colours, but the Samsung can certainly leave dark scenes like *Kill Bill*'s buried alive sequence looking (scarily!) immersive and involving. The set is very good at reproducing shadow detail, and doesn't suffer badly with backlight clouding once tweaked.

Its HD images are effortlessly sharp, and superbly for £600, this sharpness is scarcely reduced at all during full-on motion fests like the mass slaughter in *Kill Bill*'s House of Blue Leaves. In fact, out of the box it's a little too in-yer-face, tipping over into noise on occasion. This is easily fixed by reducing the sharpness setting (don't use the noise reduction options, as these result in pictures looking over-processed).

Bright 3D star

The TV delivers an enjoyable experience with 3D, too – nobody makes stereoscopic Blu-rays look more detailed and HD than Samsung, for starters. Brightness and colour richness are mainly retained with 3D images despite you having to don those Active spec. This strength is especially obvious with dynamic animated

3D content like *Tangled*. The brightness isn't marred by any serious flickering problems either. In fact, the only issues are a little crosstalk ghosting over distant objects and slightly more judder than you get with 2D viewing.

Accompanying the UE48H6400's very-strong-for-its-money pictures are some more average sonics. Samsung's 20W-rated driver array manages to get quite loud without distorting or cabinet stress, and the soundstage proffered is detailed and clear, with vocals surviving all but the most cacophonous film moments. Bass sounds pretty thin and unconvincing, though, which leaves action scenes rather unbalanced – a common flat TV failing.

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: Yes. Active
4K: No. 1,920 x 1,080
TUNER: Yes. Freeview
CONNECTIONS: 4 x HDMI; 3 x USB; RF input; RGB Scart; composite video; component video; CI slot; RS232; Wi-Fi; Ethernet; optical digital audio; phono stereo audio; headphone port
SOUND: 20W
BRIGHTNESS (CLAIMED): N/A
CONTRAST RATIO (CLAIMED): N/A
DIMENSIONS (OFF STAND): 1,086(w) x 630(h) x 57(d)mm
WEIGHT (OFF STAND): 11.9kg
FEATURES: Smart TV system; Micro Dimming processing; multimedia playback via USB or DLNA; 400Hz motion emulation; Quad Core processing

Final standings

IT'S A TOUGH time to be a high-end or mid-range Full HD TV. With prices of 4K/Ultra Hi-Def screens quickly dropping, there's less and less space for all but the cheapest HD TVs to operate in. On the upside, as this strongly-contested group test has proved, the pressure from 4K is leading to some serious mid-range bargains for anyone not yet interested in 4K, or looking for a less adventurous set for a second room.

The first thing to stress is that all the flatscreens in this four-way face-off have impressed overall, with each model boasting some unique strengths – and all come in under the £800 mark, which is great news for potential buyers. We have, though, been able to separate these contenders into some sort of league table.

Bringing up the rear is LG's 47LB730V. First impressions had suggested a better fate for this set as we lapped up its sleek design and genuinely outstanding WebOS interface. Even its pictures initially set our pulse racing. However, putting those pictures into a more serious movie environment, with some dark scenes and subdued lighting, found the TV wanting in the black level department versus its rivals. And the LG isn't helped by being the most costly model here.

In third place is the Philips 48PFT5509. This screen came close to nicking second

place, actually, thanks to its very impressive bang-for-your buck appeal. But in the end we couldn't ignore its slightly noisier images, lack of 3D, second-rate Smart features and that missing third HDMI port.

Tussle at the top

Grabbing hold of a joint-winner's spot is the Panasonic TX-48AS640. This offers a potent contrast and gorgeously-sharp hi-def images, the outstanding, customisable, Freetime-equipped Smart TV service and a sleek, agreeable design. It's easily Panasonic's finest Full HD TV of 2014.

It's joined by Samsung's UE48H6400. This features an equally impressive picture performance, a content-packed (if untidy) Smart hub and great connectivity. The styling is a little uninspired, but its 'killer app' is that it undercuts the price of the Panasonic by a whole £100.

ADD SOME OOMPH TO AUDIO



Bypass those built-in speakers: None of these group test challengers offers a sound performance to do full justice to a Blu-ray soundtrack – they may be adequate for broadcast TV programmes, but bass-rich, channel-separated movie mixes can always do with a helping hand. So consider adding a soundbar or soundbase speaker for a simplistic sonic upgrade.

Soundbars: Opt for a soundbar when space is at a premium and you want to retain the sleek look of your flatscreen – some models available measure as little as just a few centimetres high. Of course, if you're going for a truly slim soundbar, ensure it comes with a separate subwoofer (ideally connected wirelessly) that takes care of low-frequency information. If you're splashing out, you deserve to get a genuine step-up in quality. Check out models including Humax's sleek STE-1000BSW (£180), Pioneer's SBX-N500 (£250) and Q Acoustics' Media 4 (£400).

Soundbases: These use their bigger enclosures to house larger speaker drivers (so don't ship with an additional subwoofer) – and double up as TV pedestals. Usually, but not always, a soundbase is the better performance bet compared to a similarly-priced soundbar – although you'll obviously need to pay more attention to their dimensions. Good auditions are Bose's Solo TV (£260) and Canton's DM 50 (£400).

HCC VERDICT



LG 47LB730V

→ £730 Approx → www.lg.com/uk
→ Tel: 0344 847 5454

HIGHS: Great design; excellent Smart interface; good sound; good 3D
LOWES: Average native contrast; some backlight inconsistencies; it's quite expensive; no 40D/ITV Player

Performance ★★★★★
Design ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

HCC VERDICT



Panasonic TX-48AS640

→ £700 Approx
→ www.panasonic.co.uk
→ Tel: 0844 844 3899

HIGHS: Great contrast; integrated Freetime; good motion handling
LOWES: Not as cheap as the Samsung; some crosstalk with 3D; average audio

Performance ★★★★★
Design ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

HCC VERDICT



Philips 48PFT5509

→ £500 Approx → www.philips.co.uk
→ Tel: 020 7949 0319

HIGHS: Exceptionally cheap; mostly good picture quality; good audio
LOWES: Content-light Smart TV service; average standard-def performance; only two HDMI; some motion blur

Performance ★★★★★
Design ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

HCC VERDICT



Samsung UE48H6400

→ £600 Approx → www.samsung.co.uk
→ Tel: 0330 7267864

HIGHS: Great value; good all-round picture; excellent Smart TV system
LOWES: Slightly clunky Smart interface; unhelpful picture presets; clouding if you don't reduce the backlight

Performance ★★★★★
Design ★★★★★
Features ★★★★★
Overall ★★★★★

Little and large

This combi offering from LG partners a supremely slender soundbar with a chunky sub.

Mark Craven appreciates the design ethos, but wants a little more performance panache

LG's premium soundbar arrives with premium styling



EARLIER THIS YEAR we looked at LG's LAB540 – a soundbase speaker with integrated Smart BD player that dazzled with its feature flexibility but suffered from a somewhat unbalanced audio performance. And, with the NB5540 soundbar/subwoofer combi, I'm getting a sense of *déjà vu*.

As soundbars go, the LG is quite well-specified for its £400 price point. Connections include HDMI input and (ARC-compatible) output, optical digital audio, 3.5mm for your smartphone/tablet and even a USB port linked to what LG describes as a 'hi-fi' DAC for music file playback. This latter hookup supports MP3, WMA, WAV, OGG and hi-res FLAC (24-bit/192kHz), but I'm not convinced that it will get much use from the typical buyer. Bluetooth streaming – also provided – should see more action. There's no NFC, but if there's one thing I've learnt in the last year or so, it's that NFC can be a pain in the antenna.

The overall styling is superb, if slim, silver and curvy is your thing. The main 'bar' measures a mere 35mm high, and 82mm deep, so you should be able to place it discreetly on your AV stand without upsetting the flatscreen feng shui (a wall-mounting bracket is supplied). Dinky LEDs keep you alert to its status. The subwoofer isn't quite so sexy, but no ugly box either, and it connects wirelessly,

making installation easy. Just find a plug socket and you're in business.

Gunning for your flatscreen

First things first: the LG NB5540 comfortably outperforms the audio of a modern flatscreen TV. Its most obvious weapon in that regard is its low-frequency output – the subwoofer, which sports a 6.5in driver and 160W amp, provides a dollop of bass weight to BD soundtracks and broadcast programmes, and exhibits a fair level of agility, too. With the French beach landing sequence in *Edge of Tomorrow*, the LG relishes the frequent LFE hits, although it sometimes overstates its welcome and needs dialling down from its default setting, unless you want to mainly hear bassy notes and nothing else.

My issue with the NB5540 is the lack of union between soundbar and subwoofer. While the latter stomps around the low-end, the former's quartet of drivers are focused heavily on treble effects, to the detriment of mid-range solidity – subsequently, the dialogue and orchestral score of the Tom Cruise sci-fi sound undernourished, which in turn only highlights the occasionally splashy nature of the dual tweeters. It's an unfined sonic signature that proves frustrating to listen to with complex soundtracks.

The NB5540 does have some things going for it. Its stereo soundstage is spread nice and wide, it can be run at relatively high volumes and the subwoofer packs quite a punch. And then there's the design. What a stunner – just a shame it doesn't sound as good as it looks ■

SPECIFICATIONS

DRIVE UNITS: 2 x tweeters; 2 x mid-range drivers
AMPLIFICATION: 320W (160W subwoofer)
CONNECTIONS: 1 x HDMI input; 1 x HDMI output (ARC); digital optical audio input; 3.5mm input; USB input
DOLBY TRUEHD/DTS-HD MA: No/No
SEPARATE SUB: Yes. 6.5in driver, wireless connection
REMOTE CONTROL: Yes
DIMENSIONS: 1,020(w) x 35(h) x 82(d)mm
WEIGHT: 1.9kg
FEATURES: Dolby Digital; DTS 2.0; LPCM; Bluetooth wireless audio streaming; music playback (MP3, WAV, FLAC, OGG, WMA) from USB; USB charge/host; audio/video passthrough in Standby mode; AV sync function; wall-mount bracket; Dynamic Range Control; Cinema, Music, News, Sports and Bass sound presets; Wireless Sound Sync with compatible LG TVs

AV INFO

PRODUCT: Soundbar/subwoofer combi

POSITION: LG's premium soundbar – the brand also offers a soundbase solution

PEERS: Panasonic SC-HTB680; Sony HT-CT370

HCC VERDICT

LG NB5540

→ £400 Approx → www.lg.com/uk

HIGHS: Brilliantly slender design; HDMI connectivity; wireless subwoofer hookup
LOWS: Weak integration between bar and sub; plenty of rivals at this price and below

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

the sound of
craftsmanship



The art of AV Receivers

With WiFi and Bluetooth connectivity, the NR1605 AV Receiver lets you enjoy all your digital files - wherever they are. And with 4k Ultra-HD you get breath-taking pictures, razor-sharp lines. All in an elegant slim-line design with a powerful punch. Enjoy!



marantz®

www.marantz.co.uk

because music matters

An all-in-one with ambition

Soundbars and soundbases may be all the rage, but Panasonic's SC-BTT505 shows **Danny Phillips** that a one-box home cinema system can still cut the AV mustard



WITH THEIR COST-CUTTING designs and compromised performance, all-in-one systems are usually seen as the poor relation of separates. But every once in a while a one-box system comes along that more discerning listeners can get on board with. The SC-BTT505 is one such offering.

With this 5.1-channel package, Panasonic has taken a more sophisticated approach to speaker design, using a two-way arrangement and aluminium-enhanced cabinets.

The styling sees Panasonic in adventurous mood. The speakers look particularly dapper. Brushed black aluminium adorns the front, where the sloping top panel curves gracefully into the baffle. And there's a surprise on the back of the main unit – instead of springclips or plugs, the SC-BTT505 uses a set of binding posts. Two HDMI inputs and an ARC-output, optical and analogue inputs, Ethernet and two USB ports make up the socket line-up.

The feature list reads like an A-Z of home cinema – 3D playback, 4K upscaling, apt-X Bluetooth, DLNA file streaming, Dolby TrueHD and DTS-HD audio, internet apps, Miracast and Wi-Fi. The only niggles are limited internet content (still no 4OD or ITV Player available) and fussy DLNA video streaming, which would only display HD files in SD.

AV INFO

PRODUCT: Upper mid-range 5.1 system

POSITION: Below a tallboy iteration in Panasonic's stable

PEERS: Samsung HT-H7500WM; Sony BDV-N7200W

Winter is coming!

Bung in a Blu-ray and you can hear the benefits of those souped-up speakers. During the frantic freeway battle in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, the BTT505's sound is full-bodied and confident. Effects are cleanly and forcefully dispatched, with a satisfying bite to explosions and shotgun blasts. You'll feel the punches and kicks, and cower when cars smash to the ground. This natural dynamism and impressive power keeps excitement levels high and distraction levels low.

What really sets the BTT505 apart is its ability to avoid sounding brash. It keeps composure when you crank up the volume, not something all-in-one systems are noted for. Dialogue cuts through clearly without sounding hard or overly sibilant.

The subwoofer does a good job, injecting a heavy thump when the Winter Soldier slams into a car roof and a rapid 'pop' with every shotgun blast. It needs reining in to curb booming but with careful tweaking it eventually locks tightly to the speakers.

The soundstage is big and weighty and there's decent scale. A 3D Cinema Surround feature claims to add 31 virtual channels to achieve a fuller sound. It's worth checking out – when Falcon starts swooping around, his movements seem more pronounced and there are fewer gaps across the rear stage.

In all, the SC-BTT505 offers a more satisfying, mature listen than you might expect, and when combined with the extensive features and agreeable styling, it's definitely worth auditioning if you're after a convenient home cinema package ■

SPECIFICATIONS

3D: Yes
UPSCALING: Yes. To 4K
CONNECTIONS: HDMI v1.4 output; 2 x HDMI inputs; optical digital audio input; analogue stereo input; Ethernet port; 2 x USB ports; FM aerial input
SACD/DVD-A PLAYBACK: No/No
DTS-HD/DOLBY TRUEHD DECODING: Yes/Yes
CLAIMED POWER OUTPUT: 1,200W
DIMENSIONS (MAIN UNIT): 430(w) x 65(h) x 326(d)mm
WEIGHT (MAIN UNIT): 3kg
FEATURES: DLNA media streaming; internet apps; Miracast; Bluetooth with apt-X; NFC; 3D Cinema Surround; iPod/iPhone playback via USB; control app for iOS & Android; USB media playback; H.Bass; Whisper Mode Surround; Centre Focus; picture presets; LincSD amp (2nd generation); 2D-to-3D conversion; FM radio; optional wireless rear speaker kit

HCC VERDICT

Panasonic SC-BTT505

→ £600 Approx → www.panasonic.co.uk
 → Tel: 0844 844 3899

HIGHS: Full-bodied sound; good composure; punchy bass; unusually stylish design; lots of features

LOWS: Limited catch-up TV apps; long-winded setup; some niggles with DLNA video streaming

Performance ★★★★★

Design ★★★★★

Features ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

D·W·GRIFFITH'S INTOLERANCE

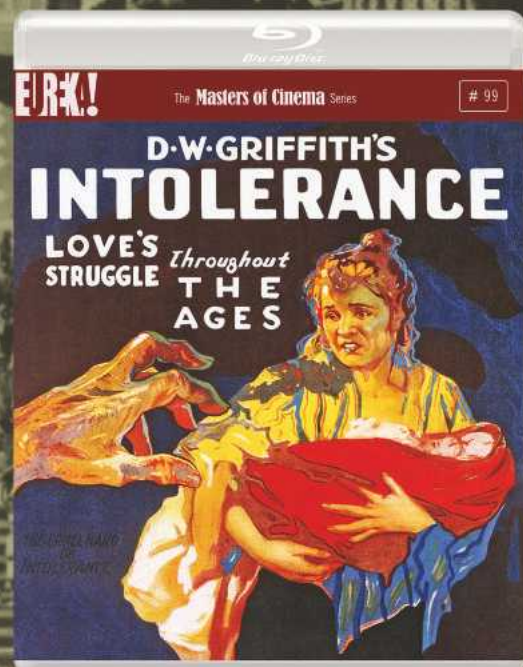
D.W. GRIFFITH'S EPIC
SPANNING 2,500 YEARS
AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN THE UK ON BLU-RAY
ON BLU-RAY & DVD THIS OCTOBER

EUREKA!
www.mastersofcinema.org

The
Masters of Cinema
Series

@mastersofcinema
@eurekavideo

AVAILABLE FROM
amazon.co.uk



Getting to grips with your media

The latest version of Nero is powerful and performs well, reckons **Martin Pipe**

ONCE UPON A time, the notion of making even your own audio CD seemed fanciful; now DVDs and Blu-rays are part of the fun. Yet the long-running Nero software has become more than a mere burning tool. The latest version here incorporates all manner of features.

Nero Recode, a conversion function, is particularly useful. Drag and drop what you want to convert, trim (or rotate – great for smartphone clips) if necessary and specify how you want it converted. You can, for example, 'shrink' dual-layer DVD rips and convert Blu-ray content into various formats.

Then there's the Video editor, which will work with most content and takes the usual timeline form. Arrange your homebrewed clips in the desired order, trim away the excess and



Rip, recode, burn, play
– Nero does it all

apply transitions, titles, effects (among them stabilisation), stills and audio as appropriate. Your result can be saved as a file, uploaded to websites or burnt to DVD/Blu-ray. It's surprisingly powerful, and gets close to

what (semi-) professional

software is capable of.

Nero 2015 Platinum also features MediaHome, an onboard multimedia organiser and player, with support for Blu-ray (3D) and 4K video files. MediaHome organises thumbnails depicting your video and photos by

date. Other neat tricks include support for the 'geotagging' feature of cameras; a DLNA server and the ability to stream or sync audio and video with an Android or iOS device. Necessary transcoding is carried out automatically.

The part that made Nero famous, Burning ROM, is as powerful as ever, giving you the opportunity to make your own CDs, DVDs or Blu-rays. That said, Nero 2015 does integrate with its own cloud service for backup; 5GB is offered free as standard.

In short, there's little that Nero can't do with multimedia, and it runs smoothly. A great 'one-stop' package and excellent value ■

HCC VERDICT

Nero 2015 Platinum → £80

Overall ★★★★★

ORBITSOUND M10 → Approx £300

Send your movies into Orbit

Danny Phillips enjoys this well-built soundbar with movies, but steers clear with music

SOUNDBAR MANUFACTURERS TRY all sorts of trickery to create a convincing surround effect in the absence of rear speakers and Orbitsound has hit upon a more effective solution than most with the M10 soundbar.

Instead of replicating a 5.1 stage, airSOUND technology widens the stereo sweet spot to make you feel enveloped. It does so using

side-firing 'spatial' drivers that bounce sound around your lounge.

It works well with movies. During *Pacific Rim*'s fight scenes, the carnage is loud and engrossing, and there's little drop in quality if you move round the room. It's helped along by the soundbar's full-bodied sound, with solid bass, lashings of lucid detail and a clear, authoritative midrange. It attacks without sounding brash, although some effects strain at high volumes. The subwoofer is no slouch, either. *Pacific Rim*'s explosions and footsteps thump into all corners. Bass is taut and hard-hitting, fusing well with the 'bar.

Great, but airSOUND doesn't do music any favours. The spatial drivers add a distracting echoey effect that

affects focus and

cohesion. The sound is spacious and detailed, but something doesn't sound quite right – and you can't turn it off either.

Design-wise, the M10 looks good. Crafted from wood and finished in black lacquer, the styling and build easily justify the price. And at 500mm wide by 95mm deep, it'll make minimal demands on your space. There are no HDMI sockets but you get an optical digital input, stereo phono and 3.5mm. There's built-in Bluetooth too.

So with its loud movie sonics and neat design, the M10 is worth investigating – but music playback is an acquired taste ■



Side-firing 'spatial' drivers' help deliver a wide soundstage

HCC VERDICT

Orbitsound M10 → £300

Overall ★★★★★



Never has top quality home cinema seating been so affordable



FrontRow™ Seating from £905.00

- Modular design for curved and straight seating configurations
- Large Range of Fabrics and Leather options
- Black leather available from stock
- Optional drinks trays and cup holders

FrontRow Prima™ Italian Seating from £2,295.00



- Three different modules to create many straight seating configurations
- 100% high grade Italian leather upholstery in a range of colours
- Electrically-operated footrest and recliner controlled from the rim of the cup holder
- A manual headrest which can be raised or lowered
- LED lit cup holder and drinks chiller

All FrontRow™ seating include a space-maximising inclining mechanism that allows seating to be placed close to a wall and include a comprehensive 5 year warranty including accidental damage. A free design service is available to ensure the seating configuration is suitable for your room.

For further information please call 01892 552561 or visit www.Frontrow-seating.co.uk

FrontRow™ Home Cinema Seating, 69 London Road, Southborough, Kent TN4 0PA

Fine-tuning with a friendly face

Mark Craven spends time with a calibration disc you actually might find on the high street

STEP INTO A Curry's or a PC World and you may come across *Knowhow Picture Perfect*, a DVD/Blu-ray/Digital Copy calibration disc that retails for £30 (or £20 when you've also purchased a new TV). Produced by Joe Kane and Scenic Labs in conjunction with DSG Retail, it aims to help you get your display set up correctly – or, at least, better than it was when it left the shop.

That a retailer is actually making an attempt to stop the nation sitting down to watch pictures that are bright, gaudy and look like the inside of a packet of Skittles is nice to see. However, the overriding issue with display calibration is that it can only be achieved accurately with some pro-level measuring tools – all test discs have their limits. Furthermore, *Knowhow...* struggles to find a

happy medium between AV idiots and those with a deep techie interest.

Presentation is user-friendly, to a point. The disc is split into Recommended Setup and Advanced Setup, with sections introduced by a nicely legible narrator. Working with onscreen patterns and a provided booklet, Recommended Setup covers Brightness,

Contrast, Sharpness and Colour – of which all but the latter are easily tweaked to a decent standard. For colour, the use of blue, red and green colour filters is required, and there's a fair bit of 'you might not be able to match the printed test pattern.'

The Advanced section is where many buyers will end

up tearing their hair out. It's ignored by the accompanying booklet, and features a variety of test patterns that could frighten novices (SMPTE RP 133 Resolution Chart, anyone?). There are some dry tech overviews here, too.

In all, this is a well-meaning disc that serious enthusiasts will ignore, and everyday consumers may feel short-changed by. The Recommended Setup section takes less than 30 minutes to spin through. Go beyond that, as anyone who's spent £30 will feel is their right, and it becomes overwhelming. Some may prefer to stick to their TV's 'cinema' preset and save their money ■



The test patterns have been created by AV guru Joe Kane

HCC VERDICT

Knowhow Picture Perfect → £30

Overall ★★★★★

SONY BDP-S6200 → Approx £150

Step-down sibling

The BDP-S6200 sells for around £50 less than Sony's BD flagship. **Danny Phillips** investigates

THE BDP-S6200 IS a gem of a Blu-ray player in more ways than one – it's tarted up to look like a crystal, using sloping triangular top panels, mirroring the 'Sense of Quartz' design of some BRAVIA TVs. The compact size is ideal for bedroom use, but don't try stacking anything on top. The gloss-black plastic bodywork looks snazzy but feels cheap.

As well as HDMI v1.4 and coaxial digital outputs (wot? no optical?) there are front and rear USB ports to play MKV, AVCHD, WMV, MP3, WMA and WAV files, as well as downscaled hi-res FLAC and ALAC. If you want proper hi-res audio playback, you'll have to step up to the top-end BDP-S7200. That deck also spins SACDs, and has a more grown-up design.

Network file streaming is also possible through the built-in 'Super Wi-Fi' or Ethernet connections – the Sony streams everything except MKV and FLAC. 4K upscaling, 3D playback and Miracast all come as standard.

The lack of ITV Player, 4OD, Now TV and Spotify makes Sony's internet content less compelling than Samsung and LG's, but with BBC iPlayer, Demand 5, Amazon Instant Video and Netflix on board it's still a decent line-up.

Performance is on the money. The BDP-S6200 feeds sharp 2D and 3D pictures to your flatscreen, while the dual-core processor ensures very quick operation, boot up and disc loading. The deck uses Sony's Xross Media Bar menu system, which makes it a cinch to explore content and tweak settings. If you get sick of the bundled remote you can try out the slick TV Side View smartphone app.

The BDP-S6200 definitely deserves a place on the shopping list of budget BD buyers. But the missing web apps and plasticky build quality count against it ■



The BDP-S6200's design is compact and angular

HCC VERDICT

Sony BDP-S6200 → £170

Overall ★★★★★



Absolute Quality



CX-A5000
11.2 Channel Pre-Amplifier



MX-A5000
11 channel Power Amplifier

The Ultimate in Home Cinema,
from the biggest sound company
in the world.



facebook.com/uk.yamaha.av
<http://uk.yamaha.com>

Powered by music

Hi-Fi Choice

PASSION FOR SOUND

www.hifichoice.co.uk

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE...

to getting the best possible sound from your hi-fi, whether you're buying, tuning or tweaking

Fuel your passion for sound and make your music sing **OUT NOW!**



twitter.com@HiFiChoiceMag



facebook.com/hifichoice.co.uk



DIGITAL COPY

Does LG want other brands to push ahead with OLED? Do the people that make Sony's AVRs ever speak to the people that make Sony's movies? **Mark Craven** is in a pondering mood

EVERY AV BRAND wants to be a market leader, I imagine. But what if you are the leader of a market that no one else is properly involved in? This is the current situation for LG, which has just announced a second-generation OLED display (see page 7) to join, erm, its first-generation OLED display on retailers' shelves.

Okay, that's not entirely fair. Samsung did launch a 55in curved OLED telly towards the end of 2013 with a £7,000 ticket, but as far as I can tell it's currently unavailable to buy anywhere. LG's OLED screens, on the other hand, are stocked in Curry's. The OLED-hungry consumer is given the choice – LG, or not at all.

Is that a problem? Not in quality terms. LG's WRGB OLED technology is, judging from my experience, the bee's knees, with astonishing dynamics, clarity that's maintained under motion and vibrant colours. Its OLED flatscreens are items you can buy with the confidence that comes from knowing there's nothing out there to match.

But it is a problem that it has no competition. Not just for the consumer, where competition equals price wars equals saving money, but for LG itself, I would suggest. With the OLED market so small, and dominated entirely by a single brand, it will pass many people by. For the tech to take off, and become mass-market, it surely needs other companies to jump onboard.

Compare and contrast OLED with Dolby Atmos. The latter, as a new AV technology, has fairly raced out of the blocks. Judging from the letters we receive at HCC, it's easily captured your imaginations. Admittedly, the percentage of the population that wants to have an AV receiver, metres of cabling and multiple speakers in their house will be far smaller than the percentage of the population that just

wants a snazzy new TV, but the reason that Dolby Atmos doesn't appear to have died on launch is surely that it's had wide-ranging support from all manner of brands.

Sony in the slow lane?

Speaking of Atmos, you may have noticed one brand that isn't yet involved in the living room land grab – Sony. And considering its AVRs occupy the same price points and target the same buyers as those from Yamaha, Pioneer and Denon, which have all released Atmos models, its absence is a bit odd.

I've asked a couple of people at Sony the straightforward question of 'When will you be releasing an Atmos receiver?' and an answer is never forthcoming. Common sense would suggest next Summer, when it typically refreshes its range, but no one is daring to confirm that. Perhaps Sony simply doesn't know because it hasn't even begun noodling away on Atmos, but that would be strange to say the least. The Big S has never been behind the times when it comes to home audio – it's recently unveiled some custom install-focused AVRs (the ES Z series) with plenty of multizone trickery and eight-port Ethernet switching – and it's an organization with more appreciation of the film industry than its rivals. Indeed, sister brand Sony Pictures has embraced the Atmos format with the likes of *Elysium* (pictured) and *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*.

I do fully expect Sony to launch Atmos hardware in 2015; I'm just surprised it hasn't done so already. After all, not being involved in a growing market is surely even worse than being the market leader of a small one ■

*Will your next TV be an OLED model?
Let us know: email letters@homecinemachoice.com*

Mark Craven used 'the bee's knees' because it makes more sense than 'the cat's pyjamas'. But if your moggy dons nightwear, let him know





FILM FANATIC

His multi-region Blu-ray player might have died, but that isn't going to stop **Anton van Beek** from splashing his cash on importing hi-def discs that he can no longer watch...

THE HEART HAS been ripped out of my home cinema setup! It's now been about a month since my Pioneer multi-region/zone modified Blu-ray player gave up the ghost. To this date I still don't know what actually went wrong with the deck itself. All I know for sure is that there was an ungodly-sounding whirring and clanking from the player, a return visit to the original retailer who couldn't find a fault, and shortly after getting it back (just after the warranty ended, naturally) a complete failure of the disc mechanism. All of which has left me stranded me in a world of Region B Blu-rays and R2 DVDs.

Now this might not be much of a problem for some readers, but for me it's a complete nightmare. **This is the first time I've been without any kind of multi-region capability since I purchased my very first DVD player back at the tail-end of the '90s** (a remote-hackable Samsung machine). Ever since then I've built a collection of discs from around the world, something that has continued onto Blu-ray in recent years.

Because of this, I now find myself in a situation where I can't even watch around half of my collection. Seriously.

In the past I've often enjoyed TV shows on disc after my other half has gone to bed (thereby curtailing the use of my home cinema speaker array). But now, not only are there entire TV shows that I can no longer enjoy because I imported the whole lot on R1 DVD (say, *Batman: The Animated Series*), there are some shows that I own on a mix of R1 and R2 DVD. So, while I can happily sit through the first season of *Community* on R2 DVD, I'm bang out of luck with the next two seasons, which I imported from the US ahead of their UK release, thinking I was being clever.

Some of you might be wondering why I haven't simply bought a new multi-region player to replace the one that kicked the bucket. The truth of the matter is that other financial commitments have made it impossible so far – financial commitments that (much to the bemusement of all and sundry) include ongoing purchases of region-locked discs from abroad that I still cannot watch. Such is the curse of the die-hard film fan.

Getting your priorities right

I've tried to explain it to my partner, but she cannot wrap her head around the idea that I can spend the best part of £100 importing a Region A-locked 15-disc *Halloween: The Complete Collection* Blu-ray boxset, instead of putting that money towards a replacement chunk of hardware. Nor the £50 I've just splurged on importing the *Nightbreed: The Director's Cut* Blu-ray release.

As both of these are limited editions, what other choice did I have? Could I really take the risk that either might sell out at retail, thus forcing me into a position where I might have to pay over-the-odds on the secondary market instead [*or how about not buying them at all – Ed*]?

To top it all off, Christmas looms menacingly close, meaning I'm expected to splash out on presents for friends and family, rather than taking the plunge on a new deck and plugging the gap in my AV kit rack. So it looks likely that it'll be 2015 at the earliest before that happens – that is, of course, as long as nobody announces a Region A-locked limited edition Blu-ray boxset of the *Hellraiser* films between now and then. In which case, all bets are off... ■

Could you manage without a multi-region Blu-ray player? Let us know: email letters@homecinemachoice.com

Anton van Beek spent so long searching the HCC cupboards for a multi-region/zone disc player that we considered locking him in and just moving on...



HDANYWHERE™

Use code: HCCDec

5% OFF

mHub multiroom systems
(including the NEW mHub 4K)



All your HD on every TV.

mHub from HDAnywhere™ lets you access any four HDMI media devices, your recordings and on-demand services on up to four HDTVs at the same time. Pause a movie in one room and resume watching it in another using mHub's Follow-me-TV feature.

Take the hassle out of installation by finding a professional installer near to you on **HDAnywhere's Installer Network™**.

To find out more visit:

HDAnywhere.co.uk



UK Sales | HDAnywhere.co.uk | 01684 576 348 | sales@HDAnywhere.co.uk



HARPENDEN • EDGWARE • BECKENHAM



3 times award winner
HOME CINEMA CHOICE
"Best Multiroom Installation"



THE BEST HOME CINEMA CHOICE

With 3 showrooms and 7 demonstration rooms, featuring all the latest systems and award winning separates from the world's leading manufacturers, we promise every customer the finest entertainment experience. Whatever your budget, whether you simply want a new radio or a complete Home Entertainment installation, we're here to help.

**HIFI • HOME CINEMA • MULTIROOM AUDIO • HOME AUTOMATION
LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEMS • A/V DESIGN & CONSULTANCY**

Musical Images Showrooms Opening times 9.30am - 5.30am. Monday - Saturday

82 High Street, Harpenden

Hertfordshire AL5 2SP

Tel: 01582 764246 **NEW SHOWROOM**

harpenden@musicalimages.co.uk

173 Station Road, Edgware

Middlesex HA8 7JX

Tel: 020 8952 5535

edgware@musicalimages.co.uk

126 High Street, Beckenham

Kent BR3 1EB

Tel: 020 8663 3777

beckenham@musicalimages.co.uk

www.musical-images.co.uk

musical images

@musical_images

Audio Visual Lifestyle Ltd trading as Musical Images. Finance options available, subject to status. E&OE

SAPPHIRE

"Ultimate Range"
of Tab Tensioned In-ceiling Screens

**SSP from
Only £1,416.00**

For when only the best will do ...



**5 Year
Warranty**

Imagine if

- * You had a screen that was almost invisible to visitors until in use. When you finish viewing the trap door closes magically to hide the fabric.
- * If the motor and the structure was designed to be whisper quiet.
- * If the screen was able to drop down automatically when you turn on your projector.
- * If the fabric was one of the best in the business for 4K projection giving vibrant colour with a perfectly flat soft tensioned surface.
- * If the product had a 5 year comprehensive warranty.

**Dreams are now
reality!**

Model Numbers	VIEWING SIZE (MM) (L+H)	SIZE (FEET)	CASING (MM) (L+H+D)	ASPECT
SETC200WSF-ATR	2030 x 1140	80" x 45"	2625 x 155 x 170	16:9
SETC240WSF-ATR	2340 x 1320	92" x 52"	2935 x 155 x 170	16:9
SETC270WSF-ATR	2670 x 1500	105" x 59"	3245 x 155 x 170	16:9

Available for next day delivery
from many quality retailers and
distributors in UK and Ireland

www.Sapphireav.com

QR
Code





THE INSIDER

Martin Dew explains what the Christmas season – and beyond – is like in Hollywood, and wonders whether it's time for The Academy to relax a little about 'screener' piracy

CHRISTMAS IN BLIGHTY is the best: Marks & Spencer socks, turkey, sprouts, vats of red wine, the purple one in the Quality Street tin, putting your feet up to watch Richard Burton and Clint Eastwood dangle from a cable car in *Where Eagles Dare*... Can't beat that, really. Residents of Los Angeles, by contrast, in early December usually mutter something about not getting along with their 'biological mom' or their 'biological dad', how Ohio is too cold to bother heading back to, and that the previous month, everyone in the family ended up not speaking on Thanksgiving Day and nearly died in a Black Friday sales crush.

Not to worry. Los Angeles has two seasons of entertainment industry nirvana to look forward to from January. The first is 'Pilot Season' and the second is 'Awards Season'. Pilot Season consists of industry hopefuls from across the world descending on the town to shoot, and pitch, their new idea for a 23-minute sitcom, or 46-minute drama. Estimates vary as to how many pilots are produced each year, some at a considerable expense, but while certain sources report 100-500, others suggest the actual number runs into thousands. Of those, only a handful will get picked up and developed into a broadcast show in the New Year.

But that doesn't stop the hysteria that consumes Los Angeles during the early months of the year, and the chorus of 'It's Pilot Season, it's Pilot Season!' is a deafening, if rather irritating one; presumably not least for the scores of actors, including the Brits who make the trek to this oasis of stucco and sunsets to promote their talents. Many leave after only a few weeks, with tail nestled firmly between legs, when they learn that there is little prospect of getting into an audition room without a work permit or agent representative.

That leaves Awards Season, which culminates with that holiest-of-holy pageants, The Oscars. Leading up to Los Angeles' annual day of self-congratulation in March are a slew of other ceremonies, including the SAG (Screen Actors Guild) Awards. Here, all actor members, including yours truly, get to vote on fellow luvvies' performances in films and TV shows from the previous year by watching 'screeners' – watermarked DVDs that fill up our mailboxes during January. I'm not quite sure why those screeners don't arrive as Blu-rays – it must be to do with copy protection. But seeing as **a very well-known cinematographer actually asked me over the Summer what an AV receiver was**, I don't suppose anyone's going to complain anytime soon.

Talking trophies

Better than getting screeners, though, was my annual invitation by a friend and former employee of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) to view all the Oscar-nominated feature, documentary and short films. (AMPAS, incidentally, with its army of film historians and archivists, is an organisation that deserves wider recognition beyond merely doling out the Oscars).

For three years running, I made a pledge to see every nominated title, which is no mean feat when you consider that there are usually about 60 of them, all during the month of February. To view them at the Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills with Academy members was an absolute treat – and it almost makes up for the lack of a Terry's Chocolate Orange on Christmas Day ■

*Do you fire up your home cinema on Christmas Day?
Let us know: email letters@homecinemachoice.com*

UK-born **Martin Dew** trained as an actor but ended up working for Lucasfilm THX and then NEC in the US. Now, though, he's back in front of the camera



Screen of dreams

HCC reader **Nic Cowpe** reveals how even a tight budget wasn't going to stop him making his own projector screen – and it now forms the centre-piece of his AV setup



Marvel's Avengers Assemble gets a lot of spins in this room

Forward-thinking Nic had his cinema room wired for his speakers and projector when his house was built. Clever...



Introduce yourself...

My name is Nicholas Cowpe, and I live in Perth in Western Australia. I'm 45 years old and, yes, I am a certified AV-Holic!

That's good to hear! How long have you been into home cinema?

I've been a home cinema fan ever since I went to the Last Drop Village hotel, in Bolton in the UK, for the 1989 AV show – so around 25 years now.

While I was there I went into the Yamaha demonstration room, where they were running a demonstration of the very first Dolby Pro-Logic DSR-100 processor. I've been hooked ever since.

Roughly how much have you spent on your hobby?

Over the years I must have spent at least \$20,000 on equipment.

And what are you using at the moment?

My current setup consists of a Yamaha RX-V573 7.1-channel AV receiver and a Yamaha BD-S671 3D Blu-ray player. For other sources I also have a Pioneer CLD-925 LaserDisc player, a Toshiba HD-DVD player, and a Sony PlayStation 3 and an Xbox 360 for gaming.

My model of projector is the Epson Powerlite 3010 1080p LCD 3D projector. This was imported from the USA for a bargain price



Seeking a system upgrade on a small outlay, Nic constructed his own 120in projector screen. The first step was to make the sub frame from pre-primed pine



Nic used matt black spray paint to coat the front outer frame. This provides a neat finish and a clearly defined edge to his bigscreen visuals



For the screen itself, blackout curtain material is used – the fabric is naturally stretchy enough to offer a snug fit to the frame, and its reverse side has a matt sheen

of \$1,700 AUD. The equivalent model here was over \$4,000 AUD so I didn't hesitate on buying it. Image quality is great.

This works in conjunction with a new D.I.Y. 120in projector screen.

And what speaker configuration are you running?

I am currently employing a 7.1 speaker setup. My centre enclosure is a Tannoy Mercury FC. The main L/R channels are handled by a pair

'I was at a demo of Yamaha's very first Dolby Pro-Logic processor. I've been hooked ever since'

of Tannoy Mercury M5s – these were bought from eBay here in Australia for a wallet-friendly price of \$250. My rear sides and backs are wall-mounted Yamaha NS-A202s. These are a bit old now but do the job nicely at the moment, and I've custom painted them to fit in with the décor of the room.

All cables for the speakers were built into the walls when we had the house constructed. No cables are visible at all, which keeps everything neat and tidy.

I use a Yamaha YST-SW50 active servo subwoofer. Again, it's a bit old but together with the Tannoy main speakers, which feature dual midbass drivers, I get a very nice, deep bass to complement my movies. I've had this ever since my first system back in the early 1990s. I should upgrade really but I've found it to be great for my needs.

What's next on your kit list?

I'll soon be getting an Xbox One.

So, why did you build your own screen?

The size of my previous screen was 100in. I built a new screen just for the size, and, wow, that extra 20in makes a huge difference. ➤



The outer two chairs in the four-seat curved sofa unit recline, while the middle two are fixed



Movie poster art sets the scene in this dedicated movie den

Over the years I've always wanted the ultimate largescreen experience. I started off with a 50in plasma, then moved up to a projector with an 82in screen, then to 90in, then 100in. After much debating on whether to buy a new screen or to make one myself, I decided to make one.

I chose to do it myself simply because of the cost involved and because I knew the end product would be as good as a bought one. Prices for a decent 120in screen were in the region of \$500-\$700 from my local home cinema shop. So off I went to the local Bunnings store – the equivalent to B&Q in the UK.

How did you make it?

The main sub frame of the screen was constructed from 90mm x 20mm smooth pre-primed pine, and all the braces were made from the same material. The front frame

was built from behalves 66mm x 20mm pre-primed pine.

I cut all the angles with a borrowed circular angle saw and pre-drilled from the back to screw the front frame into place. I then sprayed the front finished frame with black matt spray paint.

The material I used was actually curtain blackout material. The store had what was called 1 Pass, 2 Pass and 3 Pass material options. I went for the 3 Pass as this lets no light through whatsoever, plus it had a slight stretchy capability, which was ideal for getting it to fit my frame. One side of the material is shiny while the viewable side is more of a matt sheen, ideal for screen viewing.

I removed the pre-drilled front frame, cut my material to size and stretched and stapled the material into place. I then screwed the front frame back into position, covering the staples.

The screen was then hung on the wall with simple hooks. The whole build only took me a day and was quite simple to do. All that's required was just basic carpentry skills.

I have to say the picture quality is awesome. Since installing the screen I watched *Avatar 3D* and was blown away. It's full screen image in 3D was so immersive. It more or less fills the wall now.

The total cost of the build was \$100. I cannot tell the difference from the bought one I had previously. Friends that come over think it's a bought screen, too, so mission accomplished I think!

What do you think of your room's overall performance?

The 3D side of the cinema is out of this world. That, together with 7.1 sound, is just superb. We recently watched *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, and the resulting picture and sound quality was spot on.

You have a lot of movie memorabilia...

I could talk forever about my movie pieces! My favourite has to be the Sideshow Terminator 2 life-sized bust. It took me forever to get the money together for that but it was worth it in the end.

My second favourite is the Iron Man Legendary scale bust. The release of this was put back so many times I lost count, but again when it arrived I was very happy.

Are you interested in Dolby Atmos?

Dolby Atmos is very tempting I must say, but the cost of the AV receivers here is a bit expensive for me at the moment, so I will hang on to my regular 7.1 system for a bit.

And what about 4K?

4K doesn't really bother me at the moment because I'm so happy with my current Full HD projector. Maybe in the future...

What do your friends and family think of your AV passion?

They love the whole home cinema experience! My wife enjoys watching the *Die Hard* films and the *Fast and Furious* franchise.

And, finally, what's your current favourite Blu-ray?

My current favourite has to be *Avengers Assemble* in 3D. Both the picture and sound quality are awesome ■



Iron Man tops one Tannoy floorstander...



...while a Terminator skull graces the other



The Epson PowerLite projector was imported from the US

BE IN HCC!

EMAIL US: If you want to share your home cinema setup with other readers, email a selection of hi-res pictures (including one of yourself if you want) to letters@homecinemachoice.com with the subject heading 'AV-Holic', and we'll be in touch.

HOME CINEMA



DESIGN SERVICE

- Award Winning Designer
- Room Design
- Acoustic Design



PRODUCT SUPPLY

- Projectors and Screens
- Audio Visual Equipment
- Control Systems



INSTALLATION

- Experienced Technicians
- Calibration



'Bitten by the AV bug!'

Paul Smith has undertaken a kit upgrade and room overhaul to arrive at his ideal home theatre. And he's now giving you a guided tour



Paul revamped his room last year to include new speakers, amp, projector and screen

Introduce yourself...

I'm Paul Smith, and I'm 57 years old. I've worked in Production Management for the last 40 years, within two local engineering companies. In the Summer of 2012 I had a quadruple heart bypass, in addition to being diagnosed with Parkinson's a few years earlier. While recuperating from the operation, I decided to pursue a long-held ambition of mine to own a home cinema.

How long have you been an AV-holic?

It was back in the 1980s that I first became interested in entertainment via something more than a solitary Hitachi 4:3 TV and Sony VHS video recorder.

In those days Sony made the 'must-have' gear for the masses (according to a well-

known *Monty Python* comedian anyhow). New kit was relatively more expensive back then.

Therefore I jumped at the chance to buy a second-hand Sony Dolby Pro-Logic STR-D511 FM-AM receiver system I spotted in a local newspaper. The seller was obviously keen to demonstrate the equipment's potential by giving me my first ever viewing of *Top Gun* in surround sound. The sound blew me away as the jets seemed to be passing overhead.

Post heart op in late 2012, I made my first attempt to build a 'complete' home cinema using the best-value items I could find, without breaking the bank. This consisted of an Optoma HD200X projector and a 119in Duronic EPS119/169 projector screen, and a Sony BDP-S370 linked into a Sony 5.1 DAV-S800 system and a 36in Sony CRT TV.

However this was not a tidy setup, with wires trailing around the floor and having to dismantle and re-position the PJ every time it was used. My first idea was to suspend the PJ from the lounge ceiling via a hand-adjustable Optoma ceiling mount. I quickly dismissed that idea due to the same wires needing to be run up and down walls and ceiling.

By June 2013 I decided to make radical improvements in the pursuit of my ideal cinema. I was now truly bitten by the AV 'bug'.

What's in your setup now?

The projector is a JVC DLA-X500R, fitted to a Screen International SI-100 ceiling lift. The screen is a Da-Lite 119in model.

My amp is a Yamaha RX-A3030, which drives my KEF speakers (two R500s, an

R200c centre, four Ci200QR in ceiling models and an R400b subwoofer). Sources are a Marantz UD7007 BD deck and Humax Freesat receiver. I also have a 50in G series Panasonic plasma. Control is via a Nevo Q50 remote.

Why did you opt for in-ceiling speakers for the surrounds and rears?

For me it was a case of finding the optimum positions for the speakers and the PJ just

'I have the largest screen I can fit, the projector is outstanding and the sound is marvellous'

behind the seating area. Consideration needed to be given to the JVC's required distance from the screen and my wish to have as much kit hidden as possible.

To do this the ceiling had to be dropped, although there was a limit to how far this could be done, due to the room being part of an old cottage. The major factor dictating the distances was the old wooden beam which supports the upper floors, midway between the PJ and the screen. Once this had been done the holes could be cut virtually anywhere in the ceiling, as required.

Are there any aspects of the setup you think could be improved?

I'm always looking for improvements on whatever I do, but this should be the last big change in my home cinema that I intend to make for some time. I now have the largest screen I could fit into the space available, the projector is outstanding and the sound system is marvellous.

I love the bells and whistles, like the programmable remote which generates 12V triggers to close down or open up different functions: e.g. window blinds, Blu-ray player, amplifier, screen then PJ in sequence.

I still struggle at times to close down the two lighting sets fully, though. Just when I think I've got the hang of it, it trips me up again...

What's your favourite bit of kit?

We're really talking about several pieces of excellent kit that fulfil the system needs as part of the overall unit. However, I especially like the JVC projector. It produces such a perfect image.

What's next on your equipment wish list?

I'd like to think I could buy into Dolby Atmos, though I've not looked thoroughly into whether I should need a new amp or just an upgrade on the existing Yamaha [you'll need a new one, unfortunately – Ed].

How much have you spent on the room?

I don't tend to talk about that, or I risk getting into cost comparisons with major cinema ticket charges. I feel this is missing the whole point somehow.

What do friends and family think of your home theatre?

They love it. It came in very handy for the World Cup in the Summer, and with Winter approaching there's certain to be more movie viewings.

Special thanks to Mike (chippy), Nick (sparks) and Tony (AV guru) for helping me to achieve my dreams of a bespoke home cinema design.

What's your favourite Blu-ray?

It's hard to pick just one film, so I'll have to vote for four in order of preference:

Best for demos is definitely *The Dark Knight Rises*, while my favourite sci-fi flick is *The Matrix*. For the best movie of 2014 I'll go with *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. And the



The JVC PJ drops into place when required

best comedy? *Untouchable*. A French true story with subtitles.

And what discs do you use to show off the system to visitors?

As well *The Dark Knight Rises*, I often use *Rush* and *Pacific Rim*. Although I found the acting a little 'cheesy' in the latter, the SFX looks great via the JVC's 4K e-Shift.

Do you watch any movies/TV from download/streaming sites?

I'm signed up to Amazon Prime, but my remaining DVD/BD selection deserves to be viewed first. This means I could be a while... ■



KEF's R Series handles audio



Jack Russell Tammy enjoys loud movies, we're told

Feedback

Got an axe to grind? Need to comment on current technology?
Want to share your knowledge with our readers? **HCC** is here to help

What Panasonic to purchase?

May I begin by offering my sincere congratulations on the production of another superb issue (#239) of *HCC* [if you must – Ed]. I have always found your publication an ideal Saturday morning read.

Could you offer some advice? We currently have the Panasonic TX-P50VT50B. What current Panasonic model is the equivalent to the VT50B?

Brian Emmanuel, via email

Mark Craven replies: We don't have a straight answer to your question! The TX-P50VT50B was released in 2012 as Panasonic's flagship model for that year. Since then, it's released the VT65 and ZT65 series in 2013.

The VT65 would be the rough equivalent from last year. The ZT65 was a more expensive 'limited edition' reference-grade screen – and the best model we'd ever seen from Panasonic. All of these were plasma displays. However, in 2014, Panasonic no longer sells plasmas, hence the complication – there isn't an obvious equivalent in its current range, which is entirely comprised of LED-based LCD TVs.

The imminent flagship model from Panasonic is the AX902 – which should have hit stores in the last couple of weeks. This is a 4K-resolution LED TV that Panasonic says has been designed to emulate the image quality prowess of its top-flight

Panasonic's plasma TVs are no more



★ STAR LETTER...

The cost of going to the cinema is too steep for me

Having been an avid reader of your magazine, I thought I'd share my thoughts with you all.

I've loved the cinema ever since I was a child – there's nothing better than going to see a great movie and escape for a few hours – but I've just looked at the price of a cinema ticket now and I'm shocked. For my wife and child and myself it will cost over £20 to go and see a film, and that's without petrol and snacks! And that's even seeing a film in the daytime!

I know that cinema chains have to pay for the films, staff wages, heating and lighting, etc, but I feel their pricing is a bit too steep.

So now I've decided to make my living room into a home cinema with a 120in projector screen. For the price of an outing to the cinema I can buy many second-hand Blu-rays and enjoy comfy seats, homemade popcorn, pizza and a bottle of cola at a fraction of the price.

With the advancements in home technology – including Dolby Atmos – I feel cinemas will have to be careful that they

don't price themselves out of the market. After all, it's bums on seats that keep these places going.

Chris Owen, via email

Mark Craven replies: Ah, the cost of cinema tickets. This has long been something of a bugbear (although generally I think it's the cost of cinema popcorn that causes the most fuss).

Statistics released this year by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) show that box office receipts are maintaining a similar

level while attendances are dropping. It's therefore rising ticket prices that are keeping Hollywood ticking over, with the industry increasingly reliant on dedicated movie-goers prepared to pay the premium, and tentpole flicks (and their spin-offs/sequels) that have a strong appeal to a dedicated fanbase. Put

another way, there are some fans who will pay plenty to see *Avengers 2*, and Hollywood knows it. So it's not necessarily basic 'bums on seats' that are needed. It's ones with money.

The good news is that while cinema ticket prices are rising at a steady pace, the cost of quality AV hardware for your home is dropping. Remember the UK's first 42in plasma TV? A Fujitsu model, it retailed for nearly





James Cameron's *True Lies*: still yet to break cover on Blu-ray

plasmas. Our first impressions are very favourable, but we haven't tested it yet.

We need less formats!

Although we have been aware of the advent of 4K BD for a while now, I worry that supplies of a new format will add confusion

£12,000. And that was in 1997. These days you can pick up a 42in hi-def flatscreen for under £500. The same price erosion can be seen in AV receivers, projectors and Blu-ray players.

This all means that there has simply never been a better time to treat yourself to your own cinema setup, be it using a projector or largescreen TV. Your mind already seems made up, so we hope you enjoy the show.

And, yes, comfy chairs are very important. It's all about bums on seats, after all.

Star letter-writer Chris Owen wins a copy of the *Vikings: The Complete Second Season* Blu-ray, which is available to buy now courtesy of 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment.

to the already bewildering array available now. We currently have DVD, Blu-ray and 3D Blu-ray.

With 4K just around the corner, can we add 4K and 4K 3D to the list as well? This could mean that shops and suppliers will now have to stock five versions of the same film!

Surely this means that something's got to give. Although HMV is one of the only dedicated disc media retailers around, it has recently had more than its fair share of financial difficulties. Adding another two formats to what is a growing list will do nothing to help its cause.

What's more, on page 9 of HCC #240 you ran a news article about how Hollywood 'never saw 4K coming'. In it Joe Kane states that 6K and 8K mastering is already happening. That means that the technology is already out there, and it won't be long before there are discussions about both 6K and 8K BDs or some other physical format. This would lead to an even longer list that retailers and suppliers will no doubt be forced to keep in stock, as well as general consumer confusion.

While I am all for progress and improvements in home cinema, it leads one to think that there should be some form of slimming

down on the list of available formats, and sooner rather than later.

Could this be the final 'death knell' for DVD? I hope not, as there are some places that still are not stocking many BDs now. Or will DVD outlast them all, as has happened to the CD in the audio market, despite Super Audio CD and DVD-Audio?

The back-catalogue on DVD is very extensive and BD is nowhere near catching up. There are several titles that I want to purchase that are not available on BD. *The Ghost and The Darkness* and *The Stand*, just to name two.

I have a large collection of discs that includes both DVD and BD (numbering in excess of 1,000), which has taken years to assemble. I suppose one bonus is that some of the DVDs I have may well become collectible if, as I suspect, DVD were to be wound down over time.

I just hope I'm wrong!
Steve Old, via email

Mark Craven replies: Interesting points, Steve. You're certainly right that the idea of separate releases for 3D 4K, 4K, BD, 3D BD and DVD sounds like quite a headache for both retailers and consumers. At the same time, single-disc packages are a vital

option for those who don't have need for a 'Triple-Play' package, or want to save pennies.

Could DVD die in the face of 4K BD? Not a chance. The format has been around for over 15 years, and won't disappear without quite a fight. Sales are dropping, but not plummeting. And it will most likely be streaming services that will eventually see it off (if at all) rather than 4K Blu-ray.

The absence of the Michael Douglas/Val Kilmer thriller *The Ghost and The Darkness* on Blu-ray would be unusual if it hadn't also been so poorly treated on DVD. As far as we can gather it only ever had a barebones single-disc release back in 2001 from Paramount, which is now deleted (although can be found selling online for £30!). Perhaps the same issues that have stopped it being

CONTACT US...

Write to HCC, AV Tech Media Ltd, Enterprise House, Enterprise Way, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6HF, or email us at letters@homecinemachoice.com

Please note: we cannot guarantee to print/answer all the letters we receive. Sorry.

revisited on DVD are hindering an HD release.

As for *The Stand*, this '90s mini-series certainly has the big-budget production values to warrant a Blu-ray release – but Paramount (again) seems to be in no rush to please its fans.

(And while we're on the subject, I'd like to raise James Cameron's *True Lies* and *The Abyss* as other examples of MIA Blu-rays. If only because this time last year it was routinely rumoured they were on course for 20th and 25th anniversary hi-def releases in 2014. And now all's gone quiet. Perhaps Cameron is too bogged down with his *Avatar* sequels...)

As for 8K – I'll eat my collection of random remote controls if any 8K hardware or software surfaces for a good few years. Certainly, studios have been scanning some prints at 8K (most famously Sony Pictures' *Lawrence of Arabia*) but it's hardly a commonplace occurrence. And while Japanese

broadcaster NHK is pushing for over-the-air 8K in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, that doesn't mean UK viewers will be sharing the fun.

Special FX not so special

Good to read Anton van Beek's views on classic movie special effects that are becoming a thing of the past [*Film Fanatic*, HCC #240] as I agree completely!

While there's no doubt that SFX in modern blockbusters are getting better and better, I, for one, miss some of the innovative techniques that Hollywood studios had to use before computer-generated effects were possible. For example, look no further than the movies of Ray Harryhausen. *Clash of the Titans* and *The Valley of Gwangi* are two of my favourites – brilliant 'stop-motion' animation. Yes, it was obviously not real, but it didn't matter as the impact of those effects was simply jaw-dropping.

Gary Mead, via email

Anton van Beek replies: Great call on Ray Harryhausen, Gary. And I'll add the likes of make-up effects maestros Rick Baker (*American Werewolf in London*, *Videodrome*), Rick Bottin (*The Thing*, *Robocop*) and Stan Winston (*The Terminator*, *Aliens*) – all of whom transformed the visual possibilities of cinema (particularly horror and sci-fi) in the 1970s and 1980s without an SFX computer in sight.

I love my new speakers!

Hi guys. You did a review of the Robson Acoustics Chronos on-wall speakers [*HCC* #237]. Having seen that your reviewer liked them I contacted Robson Acoustics and ordered a pair for my system. When they were ready I went to get them – a four-hour journey from the Cotswolds! I met the owner Rob – a very nice guy – and had a cup of tea and a chat.

Anyway, once I got them home I was very pleased with how they sounded. I have them each side of

my new 58in Panasonic TV and, wow, they look fab. They're connected to my Pioneer SC-LX87 AV receiver. The other speakers in my 5.1 set (centre and surrounds) were from Dynaudio.

After setup I tried the Chronos in stereo with a CD from my Oppo BDP-105D. Again – wow. I'm no expert but they sound amazing to me! I had Dynaudio Excite X32s at the front before; the Chronos sound much better all round.

After some weeks and a lot of films, I now have a Chronos for my centre channel and some Robson Acoustics 'picture speakers' for the surrounds. I also have a very happy wife with no floorstanding cabinets. Just thought you may be interested as I know in your review you did say you would like to try a full Chronos 5.1 setup!

Mr Trevor Mitchell, via email

Mark Craven replies: Thanks for the feedback Trevor. Glad you're enjoying your new purchases – and that your wife is enjoying the new-look décor! ■

Win! Three great Blu-rays up for grabs

Just email your answer to Competitions@homecinemachoice.com to be in with a chance



22 Jump Street

Having made their way through high school (twice), undercover cops Schmidt and Jenko are off to college in this hilarious sequel to smash-hit 2012 action-comedy *21 Jump Street*.

22 Jump Street arrives on DVD and Blu-ray on November 17, and thanks to Sony Pictures we've got five Blu-rays to give away...

Question:

The directors of *22 Jump Street* had another hit this year with a film based on which toy?

Answer:

A) Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles B) LEGO C) Transformers

Email your answer with '**22 Jump Street**' as the subject heading – and include your postal address!



The Texas Chain Saw Massacre

Tobe Hooper's legendary horror film turns 40 this year and to celebrate it's been given a brand-new 4K restoration. *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre: 40th Anniversary Restoration* Blu-ray steelbook is released to buy on November 17, and courtesy of Second Sight, we've got five up for grabs!

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre: 40th Anniversary Restoration Blu-ray steelbook is released to buy on November 17, and courtesy of Second Sight, we've got five up for grabs!

Question:

Tobe Hooper also directed a remake of which 1950s sci-fi classic?

Answer:

A) Invaders from Mars B) This Island Earth C) The Day the Earth Stood Still

Email your answer with '**Texas Chain Saw Massacre**' as the subject heading – and include your postal address!



X-Men: Days of Future Past 3D

Two different generations of X-Men unite to stop the end of the world in this latest addition to the explosive superhero saga. *X-Men: Days of Future Past* is available to buy now on DVD, Blu-ray and 3D Blu-ray, and thanks to 20th Century Fox we've got three copies of the 3D Blu-ray to give away!

X-Men: Days of Future Past is available to buy now on DVD, Blu-ray and 3D Blu-ray, and thanks to 20th Century Fox we've got three copies of the 3D Blu-ray to give away!

Question:

Which of the following plays the role of Wolverine in the X-Men movies?

Answer:

A) Hugh Grant B) Hugh Jackman C) Huw Edwards

Email your answer with '**Days of Future Past**' as the subject heading – and include your postal address!

Terms & Conditions

1. Entrants must be over 18 years old and resident in the United Kingdom. 2. Employees of MyTimeMedia Ltd and companies supplying competition prizes are not eligible to enter. 3. No responsibility will be accepted for delayed, mislaid, lost or damaged entries. 4. Prizes will be awarded to the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing date. 5. No alternatives, cash or otherwise, will be offered to the winner as prizes. 6. The editor's decision is final. 7. The closing date is December 31, 2014.



**SUBSCRIBE
FOR
£19.99**
UK OFFER ONLY

WE'VE GOT CHRISTMAS SORTED! Have you?

Why not avoid those long shopping queues this year and treat your loved one to their favourite magazine? You get to save time & money, and they get their magazine delivered direct to their door!

You could even treat yourself... Don't miss out – **subscribe today!**

Home Cinema Choice

6 issues for £19.99
Saving 26%
~~Full price £27.00~~

Hi-Fi Choice

8 issues for £19.99
Saving 44%
~~Full price £36.00~~

Hi-Fi News

8 issues for £19.99
Saving 44%
~~Full price £36.00~~

Subscribe securely online: <http://mymagazineoffers.co.uk/X300>
Call: 0844 543 8200 and Quote X300 **By Post:** Please complete the form below and post it to the address provided. Quote Ref: X300

YOUR DETAILS: (This section must be completed)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Name
Surname
Address
.....
Postcode
Country
Tel/Mob
Email
D.O.B
(Complete if the subscription is for yourself)
Magazine Price

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION: (Complete 'YOUR DETAILS' first)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Name
Surname
Address
.....
Postcode
Country
Tel/Mob
Email
D.O.B
(Complete if gift recipient is under 18)
Magazine Price

PAYMENT DETAILS

Please make cheques payable to MyTimeMedia Ltd and write code X300 and magazine title on the back.
☐ Postal Order/Cheque ☐ Visa/MasterCard ☐ Maestro
Cardholder's name
Card no:
(Maestro)
Valid from Expiry date Maestro issue no
Signature Date

SEND TO:

**MYTIMEMEDIA SUBSCRIPTIONS, TowerHouse,
Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leics LE16 9EF**

TERMS & CONDITIONS: Offer ends 31st December 2014. UK offer only. Gift subscriptions will begin with the first available issue of 2015 and personal subscriptions with the next available issue when order is placed. For full terms & conditions visit <http://www.mytimemedia.co.uk/terms>. From time to time, your chosen magazine & MyTimeMedia Ltd may contact you regarding your subscription, or with details of its products and services. Your details will be processed in full accordance with all relevant UK and EU data protection legislation. If you DO NOT wish to be contacted by MyTimeMedia Ltd & your magazine please tick here: ☐ Email ☐ Post ☐ Phone. If you DO NOT wish to be contacted by carefully chosen 3rd parties, please tick here: ☐ Post ☐ Phone. If you DO wish to be contacted by carefully chosen 3rd parties, please tick here: ☐ Email

A free greetings card will be supplied with all gift subscriptions;

Please note that this will be sent to the payer's address, separate to the order confirmation. Although we will strive to supply this card prior to December 25th 2014 we cannot guarantee this for any orders placed after December 5th 2014.

FILM FRANCHISE

X-Men

Savouring the screen legacy of

Marvel's children of the atom...



Apocalypse soon(ish): Following the success of this Summer's *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, Bryan Singer has already signed on to direct *X-Men: Apocalypse*, which will hit cinemas in 2016.



While many can still pass for human, the X-Men's mutant powers come in a variety of different abilities and guises

CREATED BY COMIC book heroes Stan Lee and Jack Kirby in 1963, Marvel's X-Men were no ordinary superheroes. Unlike most of their do-gooding predecessors, this band of mutant humans born with unique abilities were frequently just as feared and hated by the public as the supervillains they battled. In this way, Lee and Kirby moved beyond tales of good versus evil, using their comic to tackle complex issues such as racism and prejudice – albeit wrapped up in traditional superhero trappings.

By the 1980s X-Men had become Marvel's top-selling comic, with its ever-expanding roster of mutants ensuring longevity and diversity through endless spin-offs and sister publications. It seemed obvious fodder for a film franchise, but it wasn't until 20th Century Fox picked up the movie rights in 1994 that production got underway

– and even then numerous false starts meant that *X-Men* didn't arrive on the bigscreen until 2000, under the stewardship of director Bryan Singer. Starring Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen, the film was a hit, and ushered in the era of cinematic superheroes that's alive and kicking today.





Getting animated: Marvel's mutants have also found success in a trio of TV 'toons: *X-Men: The Animated Series* [1992-1997], *X-Men Evolution* [2000-2003] and *Wolverine and the X-Men* [2009]



The *X-Men* films have become as much of a cash-cow for Fox as the comics are for Marvel. So far there have been two sequels to Singer's original, a 1960s-set prequel, two spin-offs for breakout character Wolverine and a time-travelling crossover that mixes characters from across the entire franchise. And this is the tip of the iceberg. Fox has announced plans for more *X-Men* and Wolverine sequels, and movies focusing on the mutants Deadpool and Gambit, as well as the spin-off comic *X-Force*. For Fox, X certainly marks the spot...

PICK OF THE BEST...

1 X-Men 2

Having clearly learnt from the strengths and weaknesses of his first *X-Men* flick, director Bryan Singer went to town with this bigger and far more ambitious sequel. The perfect blend of epic action and soap opera-style character arcs, *X2* showcases everything that fans love about the original comics.

2 X-Men: Days of Future Past

Singer returned to the franchise earlier this year with a time-travel tale that throws together the casts from his original *X-Men* trilogy and 2011's prequel *First Class*. What follows is a deft comic book blockbuster that scores extra points for wiping the dire *X-Men: The Last Stand* out of existence.

3 The Wolverine

The popular X-Man's first solo outing (*X-Men Origins: Wolverine*) was disappointing. This second Hugh Jackman vehicle is a much better attempt at capturing the essence of the character – particularly if you pick up the brutal 'Unleashed Extended Edition' that debuted on Blu-ray.

AND THE WORST...

X-Men: The Last Stand

With Bryan Singer jumping ship to helm *Superman Returns*, it fell to replacement director Brett Ratner to tie up all the loose ends in this trilogy-capper. The result was complete mess of a movie, shot through with an ugly fratboy mentality – as exemplified by Vinnie Jones' notorious line, 'I'm the Juggernaut, bitch!' Hmmm.

COLLECTIBLES

No self-respecting 'X-fan' can afford to miss out on these...

Wolverine Legendary Scale Figure



The breakout star of the *X-Men* franchise will also make a serious impact in your home with this 1:2 scale (31in) statue from Sideshow Collectibles. And at \$2,000, it will also make quite an impression on your wallet.

X-Men arcade cabinet



Konami's superior side-scrolling beat 'em up arrived in arcades in 1992 in a variety of different cabinets. Best of the bunch was this spectacular six-player variant that employed two monitors for widescreen mutant mayhem.

LEGO X-Men vs. The Sentinel



Rather more affordable than the other collectibles here, this set retails for £45 and includes LEGO versions of a Sentinel, the X-Men's Blackbird and a quartet of cutesy minifigures.

The Incredible Hulk #181



Having popped up in the final panel of the previous issue of *The Incredible Hulk*, this comic marks Wolverine's first full appearance. As such, you can expect to pay anywhere up to \$12,000 for a copy today, depending on the condition.

THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION...

The very best of the *X-Men* franchise available to buy on DVD and Blu-ray...

X-Men (R2 DVD)

X-Men 1.5: Two-Disc Special Edition (R2 DVD)

X-Men 2: Two-Disc Special Edition (R2 DVD)

X-Men Evolution: Vol. 1-5 (R2 DVD)

X-Men Evolution: Vol. 6-8 (R1 DVD – US Import)

X-Men Evolution: The Complete Third Season (R1 DVD – US Import)

X-Men: The Last Stand – Two-Disc Special Edition (R2 DVD)

X-Men: The Last Stand (Region B BD)



Hulk vs. Thor/Wolverine (Region A BD – US Import)

X-Men Trilogy (All-region BD)

X-Men Origins: Wolverine [Play.com-exclusive steelbook] (All-region BD)

Wolverine and the X-Men: The Complete Series (Region A BD)

X-Men: First Class [Play.com-exclusive steelbook] (All-region BD)

X-Men: The Animated Series – Ultimate Collection (R2 DVD)

Marvel Knights: 8 Disc Collection (R2 DVD)

Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends: The Complete Animated Series (R2 DVD)

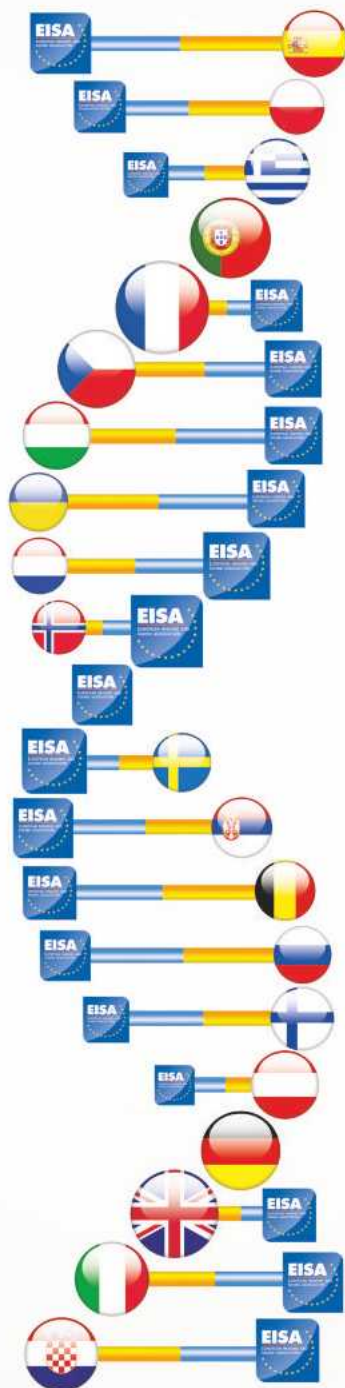
The Wolverine: Unleashed Extended Edition (All-region BD)

Marvel Anime Collection (R2 DVD)

X-Men: Days of Future Past 3D (All-region BD)

X-Men: The Cerebro Collection [Amazon.co.uk-exclusive boxset] (All-region BD)

Quality is in the DNA of the Best Brands



EISA is the unique association of 50 special interest magazines in hi-fi, home theatre, in-car electronics, mobile electronics, photo and video, from 20 European countries.

Every year the EISA jury of experts rewards the best products in each class with an EISA Award.

Where you see the EISA Award logo it's your assurance that the product is of outstanding quality.



Your assurance for quality

Tested by the Experts
www.eisa.eu

PLAYBACK

→ **SOFTWARE HIGHLIGHTS** **EDGE OF TOMORROW 3D** Relive this imaginative sci-fi flick over and over again on BD **MR. PEABODY & SHERMAN 3D** Classic TV 'toon gets a CGI makeover **FARGO** It would be a crime to miss this show in hi-def **AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.** These smallscreen heroes aren't so super **WITHNAIL AND I** The finest cult comedy known to humanity **AND MUCH MORE!**



Double team

22 Jump Street → Sony Pictures → All-region BD

Undercover officers Schmidt and Jenko head back to college in this action-comedy sequel. Can it possibly be any more 'Meta' than the first film? Turn the page to find out...

HCC RATINGS KEY...

Outstanding	★★★★★
Above average	★★★★☆
Acceptable	★★★☆☆
Disappointing	★★☆☆☆
Dire	★☆☆☆☆



Scream if you wanna go faster!



Sequel graduates with honours

Who could have guessed that doing 'the same thing as last time' would be so entertaining?

→ 22 JUMP STREET

'Nobody gave a s**t about the Jump Street reboot... Anyone with half a brain thought it was destined to fail spectacularly. But you got lucky'. So announces Deputy Chief Hardy (Nick Offerman) as he tells officers Jenko (Channing Tatum) and Schmidt (Jonah Hill) that they're going back undercover. 'Do the same thing as last time, everyone's happy'.

22 *Jump Street* follows closely in the footsteps of its predecessor, only this time sending its likeable heroes to college. And, as with the original, it's little more than an excuse to pastiche the conventions of the genre, in this case sequels that spend even more on doing the same thing again.

Under the stewardship of returning writer-directors Phil Lord and Chris Miller, the film is a hilarious commentary on the genre – one that manages to have its cake and eat it as it freewheels its way through zany gags and shootouts. And this time around it pushes the 'bromance' into all out romance, as Jenko and Schmidt's partnership follows the same emotional beats as that at the heart of most rom-coms.

While the self-referential gags are the movie's *raison d'être*, making it work so well are its leads. Tatum and Hill have great chemistry together, seeming to feed off one another's spontaneity and comic timing. So while their bromance may only exist as part of a huge film-related in-joke, they come across as more believable and likeable than most of the characters they are parodying.



Another extended drug trip allows the franchise to flirt with the surreal again



HCC VERDICT

22 Jump Street

→ Sony Pictures → All-region BD
→ £25 Approx

WE SAY: The film itself is hilarious, yet this great HD platter deserves to be taken very seriously

Movie ★★★★★

Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

Picture: 22 *Jump Street*'s 2.40:1-framed AVC 1080p encode is hard to fault. Detailing is refined, contrast looks very natural and blacks are deliciously deep.

Colour reproduction is arguably the most impressive aspect of the image, with Jenko's part of the drug-induced hallucination (Chapter 8) and the bright orange and blues of the American football uniforms (Chapter 11) being particularly vibrant and well-saturated. And as we've come to expect from Sony's hi-def platters, there's also no sign of banding, artefacts or any compression issues.

Audio: The Blu-ray delivers a compelling DTS-HD MA 5.1 soundtrack that works hard to get the very best out of the material on offer. Scenes such as the opening truck chase (Chapter 2) and the campus car chase (Chapter 11) deliver excellent dynamics with nifty steering around the soundstage and rich bass to underpin the action.

Elsewhere, dialogue is prioritised, ensuring that every gag gets its chance to shine. Music and atmospheric effects are also handled with aplomb. In all, it's a well-balanced mix.

Extras: Filmmakers Phil Lord and Chris Miller team up with actors Channing Tatum and Jonah Hill for an entertaining commentary track that almost matches the movie in laugh-a-minute terms.

The improvisational nature of the production comes across in the collections of alternate lines and a couple of the six behind-the-scenes featurettes that the disc offers up. Also included are a bunch of 22 deleted/extended scenes and a 10-minute cut of the film with all of the jokes taken out...

Cold in July

Icon Entertainment → Region B BD
£30 Approx



Based on a pulp novel by Joe R. Lansdale, this deceptively smart thriller stars Michael C. Hall as a family man

who kills an intruder in his house, only to come under attack from the victim's recently paroled father (Sam Shepard). However, this is merely the springboard for a tale that constantly plays with and subverts your expectations, carving out a unique and nightmarish niche for itself along the way. The film's stylish 2.40:1 visuals have survived the journey to Blu-ray intact, along with an excellent DTS-HD MA 5.1 soundtrack. Best of the extras is an engaging chat-track.



Filmed in Supermarionation

Network → Region B BD
£25 Approx



Covering everything from *Four Feather Falls* to *The Secret Service*, this two-hour documentary is a

must-watch for fans of Gerry Anderson's groundbreaking puppet series. Mixing together new interviews with surviving marionette manipulators and archival behind-the-scenes footage, it offers a thrilling insight into the challenges that were overcome to get the shows on the air. As well as copious extras, this release also includes a bonus Blu-ray platter hosting a restored episode from each of the featured programmes.



Night of the Comet

Arrow Video → Region B BD & R2 DVD
£23 Approx



When a comet wipes out most of humanity, two Valley girls discover that their newfound freedom is under threat

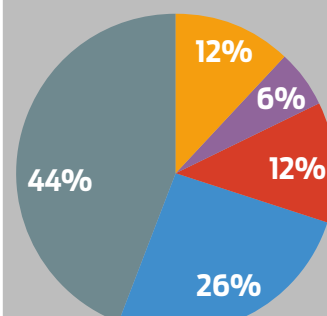
from zombies. This endearingly hokey pastiche of '50s sci-fi films has developed quite a cult following since its release in 1984, ensuring that this Blu-ray release should find a receptive fan base. The AVC 1.85:1-framed 1080p encode has cleaned up nicely, although it does retain a slightly soft look familiar to other '80s films. There are also plenty of extras to sink your teeth into, including three commentaries, interviews with the actors and make-up supervisor, and a 24-page booklet



WE ASKED...

Which is your favourite of these recent superhero TV shows?

■ Heroes ■ Smallville
■ Arrow ■ Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.
■ I don't like any of them



Results from www.homecinemachoice.com
Go online for more polling action



This re-animated dog lacks bite

You'll wish you could travel back in time to watch the original cartoons instead

→ MR. PEABODY & SHERMAN: DELUXE EDITION

Mr. Peabody isn't like other dogs. Not only is he super-intelligent, but he also won the right to adopt a boy of his own. Oh, and he also invented the WABAC, a time machine that he uses to teach his young prodigy all about history.

Directed by Rob 'The Lion King' Minkoff, we had high hopes for this CGI reboot of the segment of the same name that used to play as part of the old Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons. Unfortunately, it seems that somewhere along the line all of the wacky humour of the original got lost, leaving us with an flat film that may go down a storm with kids, but has very little to offer adult viewers.

Picture: It doesn't matter whether you opt for the 2D or 3D version of the film, either way you're in for a treat. Colour and clarity are excellent across both encodes, with the 3D presentation adding plenty of volume to the imagery – just look at the different planes of depth evident in the struts and supports making up Da Vinci's flying machine as it swoops around the city in Chapter 16.

The only slightly curious note is that while the 2D version of the film is presented in a 1.85:1 aspect ratio, the 3D version opts for 1.78:1 instead.

Audio: There are no real surprises here, with *Mr. Peabody & Sherman*'s DTS-HD Master Audio mix delivering everything you'd expect from a modern animated blockbuster. Use of the surrounds is pervasive from start to finish, constantly wrapping the viewer up in a coherent 360-degree soundstage. Bass effects are best described as potent, although



they still remain balanced with the rest of the soundtrack. Meanwhile, the dialogue and music are rendered with pristine clarity and warmth. It's a shame the movie isn't this good.

Extras: While the stereoscopic platter is barebones, the accompanying 2D Blu-ray makes amends with an interesting collection of goodies.

Things get off to a strong start with a section dedicated to the original cartoon that inspired the film. Here you'll find the original pilot episode for *Rocky & His Friends* and five additional *Mr. Peabody & Sherman* segments.

An accompanying 22-minute documentary looks at the origins of the 'toon as well as the making of the contemporary movie. You also get a tour of the WABAC machine, a short featurette, a gallery of 24 stills, two set-top games for little 'uns and the usual batch of DreamWorks trailers and music videos.



HCC VERDICT

Mr. Peabody & Sherman: Deluxe Edition

→ 20th Century Fox/DreamWorks
→ Region A/B & B/C BD → £28 Approx
WE SAY: A stunning hi-def package for this middling animated adventure

Movie ★★★★★

Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



Emily Blunt: poster-girl for the United Defence Force

Cruise's alien resurrection

This accomplished sci-fi will surely find an appreciative audience on Blu-ray



Want to see Tom Cruise getting killed multiple times? Then you'll love this!

The astonishing SFX will account for a good chunk of the movie's \$178m budget

→ **EDGE OF TOMORROW 3D**

For some reason, *Edge of Tomorrow* didn't exactly set box office tills ringing. Perhaps audiences were underwhelmed by the prospect of yet another Tom Cruise sci-fi vehicle, after *Minority Report*, *War of the Worlds* and *Oblivion*. Perhaps the name was to blame – a notion offered credence by the fact that the movie's tag-line, 'Live, Die, Repeat' is now given main prominence on the BD sleeve.

Whatever the reason, *Edge of Tomorrow's* lacklustre theatrical run is a shame, as the producers of this consistently smart, absorbing and well-executed flick deserve greater reward. Maybe home media can be its saviour.

Adapted from a 2004 Japanese novella, the premise here is mind-meltingly brilliant. Smug military PR man William Cage (Cruise) refuses to go to the front line (the beaches of France) in Earth's battle with its 'Mimic' alien invaders, so is arrested as a deserter and knocked unconscious. He wakes up surrounded by grunts, preparing to cross the English Channel and air-drop into battle. Unsurprisingly, in the ensuing fire-fight the hapless, ill-prepared Cage dies – only to wake up, again surrounded by grunts preparing to cross the English Channel and air-drop into battle...

Trapped in a time loop and facing perpetual grisly deaths, Cage's only solution is to befriend Emily Blunt's super-solider Rita – and she realises his



DEMO SCREEN...

Edge of Tomorrow 3D

Time code: 057.26 – 058.24



'You can do this!': Cage (now a highly-trained killing machine) and Rita try once again to get off the beach alive, with the latter using her acrobatic skills to outmanoeuvre the Mimic foes



Trigger happy: Cage, meanwhile, slides rapidly into view to obliterate a Mimic with his shoulder-mounted cannon, accompanied by rapid blasts from the LFE channel and a satisfying splat



Run-around rescue: With his J Squad pals in peril, Cage runs around a crater's edge, blasting away with his machine gun. The 3D works well here as the camera tracks him from background to foreground



What's next: Rita and Cage enjoy a five-second breather after nonchalantly wiping out another Mimic, so take this opportunity to marvel at the sumptuous CGI and costume design

temporal turmoil could hold the key to defeating the extra-terrestrial squatters once and for all.

Under the expert guidance of director Doug Liman (*Bourne Identity*, *Mr & Mrs Smith*), *Edge of Tomorrow* plays out like a cross between *Groundhog Day* and *Starship Troopers*, with a dose of *Saving Private Ryan*-style World War II movie chutzpah. While not a comedy, it's peppered with laugh-out loud moments; while not a romance, Cruise and Blunt's developing relationship has a tender core; and while not an out-an-out action fest, the pivotal set-pieces are as invigorating as the competition.

Oh, and the SFX are, put simply, out of this world.

Picture: Warner's release offers 2D and 3D presentations on separate discs, and both serve up home cinema eye-candy, working as a reminder of what the Full HD Blu-ray format can achieve.

It's not searing comic book primaries that grab the attention here, though, but astonishing delineation and fine details. At times there's so much to gawp at (particularly during the recurrent beach battle scenes where sand and water and Mimics are flying everywhere) that you'll want to pause the disc and bathe in the intricacy. Neither edge enhancement or overt film grain (director Doug Liman opted to shoot on 35mm) are an issue.

Black levels are gorgeous, providing a deep contrast to the military greens, grey battle suits and earthy browns on show. And even in the night-time sequences of the final act, it's never impossible to separate man from monster in the darkness.

Stereoscopic fans might be sniffy at the prospect of *Edge of Tomorrow*'s 3D iteration, as it was constructed in post-production. Yet it's worth a watch, as it largely ignores battering your eyeballs with overblown impact in favour of adding noticeable depth to some of the largescale locations (such as the military training arena) and heightening the sense of danger as CG beasts zip around the widescreen image.

Audio: *Edge of Tomorrow*'s original score is largely forgetful, but thankfully the rest of this flick's aural experience sticks in the memory. Released theatrically with a Dolby Atmos mix, home cinema fans have to make do with a DTS-HD MA 7.1 variant, which sparkles in its use of your full speaker array. The LFE channel is liberally employed, be it for slamming artillery or crashing aircraft, and the sound designers run riot with rapid and precise panning effects. The scuttling Mimics are given particular attention, ensuring you'll feel right in the heart of the action. Sterling work.

Extras: The key extra here is *On The Edge With Doug Liman*. A 42-minute behind-the-scenes doc, it makes a great accompanying piece, focusing on Liman's by-the-seat-of-his-pants shooting ethos and covering everything from set design and casting to stunt co-ordination and script development.

In addition, there are two short featurettes highlighting the weaponry and creature design, a bunch of deleted/alternate scenes (some in pre-viz form) and a linear run-through of the beach attack.



Fact: rather than shooting on location at Heathrow Airport, a mock-up was built



HCC VERDICT

Edge of Tomorrow 3D

→ Warner Home Entertainment

→ All-region BD → £28 Approx

WE SAY: A cracking sci-fi adventure, that you'll want to watch more than once, given a superior BD package

Movie ★★★★★

Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

ARCADE ACTION

Bigscreen home entertainment isn't just about movies. Check out these two videogames vying for time on your cinema system...

Alien: Isolation

Sega → X360/XOne/PS3/PS4/PC → £50 Approx



Hidden inside a locker, you peer out through a slot in the door into the gloom of the room beyond. Something is out there, moving around. You shuffle backwards as far back as you can go and hold your breath. Welcome to the terrifying world of *Alien: Isolation*...



While there have been plenty of games based on the *Alien* franchise, almost all of them have taken their cues from James Cameron's *Aliens* and transformed the nightmarish title creature into little more than a target for your over-powered array of weaponry. The Creative Assembly's *Alien: Isolation* takes a

completely different tack, offering up a survival-horror experience that drags the franchise back to the horror origins of Ridley Scott's 1979 film.

For the most part, this truly scary game pits you against one lone alien with no means of fighting it – your only hope of staying alive is to sneak, hide and maybe distract it with a noise-maker you've built out of electronic scraps. It's a style of play that encourages you to live the game moment-by-nerve-shredding moment, and this immersive quality is aided by impressive design. Not only does *Alien: Isolation* look just like an extension of *Alien*, the clever lighting effects and audio cues make it feel like a film, too. So turn off the lights, turn up the volume and get ready for one of the most terrifying games around.



Middle-earth: Shadow of Mordor

Warner Bros. Interactive → X360/XOne/PS3/PS4/PC → £50 Approx



Tolkien's Middle-earth has provided rich pickings for games over several generations of console platforms, yet unlike the source material few have stood the test of time. This third-person adventure, nominally set between the *Hobbit* and *Rings* trilogies, is a deep and bloody cut above what's gone before.



You get to play Talion, a Ranger of the Black Gate, returned from the grave by eldritch forces to a land overrun by Sauron's hordes. *Shadow...* is a single-player (no co-op) title that can be tackled online or off, and in terms of game mechanism is not dissimilar

to *Assassins Creed*; the fighting is fast and fluid. A torrent of DLC seems assured.

For cinephiles, there are enough similarities with the cinematic universe, including a photorealistic Gollum, for it to seem a coherent extension of Jackson's epics. The graphical detail of the Mordor environment alone makes for a dazzling experience. The Nemesis System at the game's heart also bubbles with brilliance. It tracks your behaviour, shaping enemies and scenarios for an almost bespoke adventure.

On the debit side, this is a complex and unforgiving title early on, with a learning curve steeper than Mount Doom. You'll despair as enemies quickly grow stronger while you carelessly fumble through the early stages. Stick with it, though, and you'll be rewarded. *Shadow of Mordor* is nothing less than Tolkien catnip.



Arrow: The Complete Second Season

Warner Home Entertainment
All-region BD → £45 Approx



After a humdrum first year, the sophomore season of this superhero series fully embraces its comic book origins and delivers 23 episodes packed with action, drama and a

multitude of outlandish heroes and villains. It also hits the bullseye when it comes to AV performance, with a four-disc Blu-ray set boasting colourful and detailed AVC 1.78:1 1080p transfers and brisk DTS-HD MA 5.1 mixes. Extras are plentiful, and include a handy 42-minute recap of the first season.



24: Live Another Day

20th Century Fox → All-region BD
£35 Approx



Following a gap of four years, the 'Jack Bauer Power Hour' returns – albeit as a 12-part series set in London. And after the wandering final few seasons of the show's original

incarnation, this truncated model offers a far leaner take on the material, even if it does throw a few too many twists into the mix (and the less said about Chloe's *Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* makeover, the better). Similarly, this Blu-ray proves rather hit-or-miss, with excellent lossless audio, strong (but not perfect) 1080p visuals and lousy extra features.



True Blood: The Complete Seventh Season

HBO Home Entertainment
All-region BD → £45 Approx



There's a funereal atmosphere hanging over this final run of HBO's supernatural soap opera. There is an ongoing story arc about the ongoing spread of the deadly Hep V virus, but the

real focus of these ten episodes is saying goodbye to the (many) characters fans have been following for the past seven years. HBO's BD boxset is on a par with *True Blood*'s last season in terms of both its AV credentials (very good) and bonus goodies (enjoyable, if slightly limited in scope).





Bilbo has been a very naughty boy...

A worthy spin-off? You betcha!

Chilly thrills abound in this hypnotic TV take on the Coen brothers' celebrated crime film

→ FARGO: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

Considering that Joel and Ethan Coen's quirky crime caper *Fargo* remains one of the best-loved movies of the 1990s, it's understandable that many were wary of this belated televisual take on the material.

There was no need to worry, though – this darkly comic 10-part series stands on its own two feet as a respectful homage to the Coens' work, yet also ranks right up there with HBO's *True Detective* as one of 2014's best new shows. Indeed, even if you're not a huge fan of the original flick, it would be criminal not to give this superior series a spin. It won't be long before you're hooked.

Picture: *Fargo* apes the work of the Coens in many ways – not least in striving to replicate an authentically film-like aesthetic. The upshot of this is that however crisp and clinical the footage may have been originally, it has been subjected to all manner of tweaks and alterations during post-production. The most obvious sign of this is the large amount of grain in the AVC 1.78:1 1080p encodes, which approaches the density of 16mm film stock in some sequences.

Understandably, colours veer towards the cooler end of the spectrum for exteriors, while interiors opt for a slightly warmer palette of browns and pastel hues, matched with deep blacks. And despite all of the digital manipulation the imagery has been subjected to, detailing remains well resolved, with



plenty of intricate textures evident in close-ups and medium-shots.

Audio: As you'd expect, *Fargo* arrives on Blu-ray sporting the obligatory DTS-HD MA 5.1 audio mixes. The thing is, for all of its cinematic pretensions, FX's show doesn't boast the most dynamic sound design you'll ever hear.

Atmosphere takes priority over action, with use of the surround channels essentially limited to giving the score a more expansive space to fill. Every now and again it does proffer something a little more involving, such as the punch of bass that accompanies each burst of gunfire at the start of the police raid in Episode Six, and the blizzard shootout that closes that instalment.

Extras: Series creator and writer Noah Hawley teams up with actor Billy Bob Thornton for two episode commentaries (*The Crocodile's Dilemma* and *Eating the Blame*) and actress Allison Tolman for a third (*The Heap*). While the first two are quite low-key affairs, Tolman brings a welcome burst of energy to the other.

This is a True Story (28 minutes) is a two-part overview of the making of the show, with particular emphasis on capturing the look and feel of a Coen Brothers production on TV (and pointing out plenty of Easter Eggs for fans).

Greetings from Bemidji (17 minutes) and *Shades of Green* (15 minutes) both focus on the cast and characters, with the latter specifically dealing with the bad guys. Also included are five deleted scenes.



This is the second attempt at a *Fargo* TV show, following a failed pilot in 2003



HCC VERDICT

Fargo: The Complete First Season
→ 20th Century Fox → All-region BD
→ £35 Approx

WE SAY: One of the year's best new shows benefits from solid AV and interesting extras on Blu-ray

Movie ★★★★★

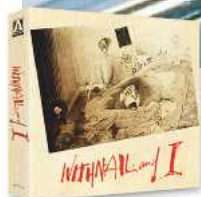
Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

'Free to those that can afford it, very expensive to those that can't'



DISC
OF THE
MONTH

Comic cult of personalities

We want the finest comedy available to humanity on BD! We want it here, and we want it now!

→ WITHNAIL AND I: LIMITED EDITION BOXSET

Writer-director Bruce Robinson's cult favourite film follows two 'resting' actors (Richard E. Grant's Withnail and Paul McGann's I) as they endure a 'holiday by mistake' in the countryside at the fag-end of the 1960s.

As far as plot goes, that's about your lot. But it really doesn't matter, as Robinson merely uses it as the backdrop to an endlessly quotable, biting funny and tear-jerkingly sad study of two unforgettable characters – one made all the more enjoyable thanks to career-best performances from those involved.

Picture: This release marks the third time that *Withnail and I* has been issued on Blu-ray in the UK, but the first where it has been treated with respect.

Unlike the heavily flawed 2009 Anchor Bay and 2011 StudioCanal platters, this release is based on a brand-new 2K restoration of the original negative undertaken by Arrow, with final grading supervised by director of photography Peter Hannan.

Colour reproduction, clarity, stability and detailing are all vastly improved over the two previous discs, lending the AVC-encoded 1.85:1 1080p visuals a depth and nuance that no previous home release has captured. And unlike the earlier DNR'd encodes, there's also plenty of well-resolved grain present throughout the transfer, just as there should be.

Audio: Given *Withnail and I*'s almost singular focus on dialogue and the lacklustre nature of the DTS-HD MA 5.1 remix that appeared on the earlier Anchor Bay



Robinson's follow-up feature *How to Get Ahead in Advertising* is also included



HCC VERDICT

Withnail and I: Limited Edition Boxset

→ Arrow Video → Region B BD & R2 DVD → £50 Approx

WE SAY: It may be pricey, but this boxset is ultimately worth every penny

Movie ★★★★★

Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

Blu-ray, we seriously doubt that anybody will be upset at its absence here.

Instead, we get a restored LPCM presentation of the film's original mono mix. The all-important dialogue sounds absolutely pitch-perfect, while the use of tracks like *All Along the Watchtower* and *While My Guitar Gently Weeps* give the soundtrack a chance to stretch its dynamic range a little further than you might expect.

Extras: Arrow's *Withnail and I* disc comes loaded with fascinating extras. There's a commentary by Bruce Robinson; a second chat-track by critic Kevin Jackson; four documentaries from Channel 4's 1999 'Withnail Weekend' (these deal with the making of the film, Bruce Robinson's career, the drinking game that developed around the movie, and fans attending an open-air screening); an appreciation of the film by *Peep Show* creator Sam Bain; an interview with production designer Michael Pickwood; and the original trailer.

Of course, by itself this wouldn't justify the large box this limited edition arrives in – or the £50 price tag it commands. Which is why Arrow has also included a 200-page book featuring essays about *Withnail and I* and its creators, contemporary reviews and script extracts for deleted scenes.

Still not enough for you? You also get a Blu-ray copy of Robinson's fascinating and even angrier follow-up feature *How to Get Ahead in Advertising*, which has been treated to a superb 2K restoration and is accompanied by another interview with Michael Pickwood and the trailer.

Wrong Turn 6: Last Resort

20th Century Fox → R2 DVD
£13 Approx



The latest instalment in the DTV hillbilly horror series takes a slight detour for a demented tale involving kissing cousins and a weird hotel in West Virginia. Packed with sick kills (death by fire hose enema, anyone?), it's a clear improvement on the past few sequels and should go down well with both horror junkies and fans of former *Emmerdale* babe Roxanne Pallett. The DVD acquires itself well with clean anamorphic 1.78:1 visuals and punchy DD5.1 sonics. Extras are less impressive, but you do get a compilation of deaths from all six movies!



StageFright

Exposure Cinema → Region B BD & R2 DVD → £25 Approx



UK indie label Exposure Cinema has hit the ball clean out of the park with its debut Blu-ray release. Framed at 1.78:1 and claiming to be restored from 'vault elements', this hi-def outing for Michele Soavi's brilliantly brutal and shockingly stylish 1987 slasher is the best-looking release this late addition to the Italian giallo genre has ever received. The LPCM stereo soundtrack also holds up okay – there is a crackling sound on the track that recurs from time-to-time, but this may be source-related. Fascinating extras include interviews and a fun piece about VHS tape collectors.



Graduation Day

88 Films → All-region BD
£23 Approx



Cult label 88 Films kicks off its new 'Slasher Classics Collection' with a hi-def release for this enjoyable 1981 genre outing. Derived from a new 4K scan of the director's own answer print, the disc's AVC 1.78:1 1080p encode may not be completely flawless (there's some obvious print damage during the opening death scene), but overall it holds up much better than expected. The inclusion of a brilliant new feature-length documentary entitled *Scream Queen: Horror Heroines Exposed* among the many extras only serves to make this Blu-ray even more of an unmissable treat for horror-hedz.



The Washing Machine

Shameless → R0 DVD
£20 Approx



This film isn't about a killer kitchen appliance. Instead, it's a 1993 thriller from Ruggero 'Cannibal Holocaust' Deodato. The plot plays out like the spaghetti splatter answer to *Basic Instinct*, with a cop investigating a murder and getting involved with three kinky sisters, any one of whom may be the killer. It's nutty stuff, but is also good twisted fun and unashamedly sexy. The DVD offers solid, if unremarkable, anamorphic 1.78:1 visuals (hampered by occasional compression artefacts) and modest DD 2.0 sonics. The sole extra of note is a gallery of on-set photos.



The ultimate hi-def nightmare

Tobe Hooper's seminal shocker revs up on Blu-ray with a new 4K restoration

→ THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE: 40TH ANNIVERSARY RESTORATION

Released in 1974, Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* is a one-of-a-kind flick; a lightning-in-a-bottle moment of movie madness that none of its creators have ever come close to recapturing.

Ignoring gore almost entirely, director Tobe Hooper's film is a nightmarish assault on the senses infused with a palpable sense of dread. And this is exactly why it caused so many problems for UK censors – they couldn't actually find anything to cut. (And were still unwilling to unleash the film on the general public until they had a change of heart in 1999). Now it's back on Blu-ray to terrify fans all over again with a new 4K restoration...

Picture: The natural question to ask here is what exactly can a 4K restoration add to a such a deliberately scuzzy slice of 16mm horror?

As you'd imagine, no amount of restoration will ever make this anything other than a grim and gritty image that swarms with buzzing grain. However, Second Sight's AVC 1.78:1 1080p encode also exhibits better than expected detailing and proves to be far more robust in terms of colour and clarity than the previous Blu-ray release.

Is it a great-looking disc? Of course not. But it is, without shadow of a doubt, the best-looking version of this film yet released for the home.

Audio: *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*'s audio has also been cleaned up here, and is offered in four different incarnations – PCM mono, PCM stereo, DTS-HD MA 5.1 and DTS-HD MA 7.1.



The PCM tracks are the more authentic versions, but the surround tracks are still effective, making atmospheric use of the extra channels surrounds and giving more power to Hooper and sound recordist Wayne Bell's terrifying, atonal score.

Extras: Who knew that there was anything about this film that had been left unsaid until now? Clearly Tobe Hooper thought so, as he provides a new solo commentary track – as do cinematographer Daniel Pearl, editor J. Larry Carroll and sound recordist Ted Nicolaou in a team affair. Add in two previously recording commentaries and...*Massacre* fans here have four to choose from.

A second Blu-ray houses the rest of the extras, the bulk of which appeared on Second Sight's 2009 'Seriously Ultimate Edition' release. In addition to that wealth of goodies, there a trio of new interviews, even more outtakes/deleted scenes and the trailer for the 4K restoration.



HCC VERDICT

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre: 40th Anniversary Restoration

→ Second Sight → Region B BD
→ £23 Approx

WE SAY: The definitive home release of Tobe Hooper's horror masterpiece

Movie ★★★★★

Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★



Marvel's TV heroes aren't so super

Smallscreen superhero spin-off struggles to take flight during its debut season

→ AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D. THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

Having achieved domination of the world's cinemas, it was inevitable that Marvel Studios would also take aim at our televisions. Spinning off from the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe), *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* follows the exploits of a special team of secret agents tasked with travelling the world and investigating reports of super-powered individuals.

With Joss Whedon serving as a showrunner, expectations were high that *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* would be another sure-fire hit for Marvel Studios. And yet, following a solid pilot episode (directed and co-written by Whedon) the show found itself bogged down with dull villain-of-the-week stories and bland characterisation that failed to recapture that Marvel magic that has made its feature-length outings so successful.

Thankfully, this all changed towards the end of the season, when it caught up with the fallout from *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*. Turning the series' world completely upside down is exactly what was needed to reinvigorate some of the characters and add excitement to the ongoing storyline. If *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* can keep up this level of quality from now on, then Season Two promises to be something pretty special...

Picture: Spread across five BD50 platters, the 22 episodes feature the sort of strong hi-def visuals we've come to expect from Disney's Marvel releases. The AVC 1.78:1 1080p encodes improve noticeably on



No road surface is safe when The Potholer is on the rampage!



the Channel 4 HD broadcasts in the UK with increased colour saturation, more refined detailing and increased clarity in dark scenes.

Audio: Originally produced and

broadcast in 5.1, *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* touches down on Blu-ray with a pleasing array of DTS-HD MA 5.1 soundtracks. While dialogue is always prioritised, there's some tasty dynamism here, with excellent channel separation and some surprisingly booming bass effects.

Extras: There's a middling selection of bonus bits: three episodes commentary tracks; a TV special about the MCU; footage from Comic-Con; five brief *Making of...* featurettes; deleted scenes; VFX clips; and a gag reel.

HCC VERDICT

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

The Complete First Season

→ Walt Disney → All-region BD

→ £40 Approx

WE SAY: This troubled series manages to look like a hi-def hero on Blu-ray

Movie ★★★★★

Picture ★★★★★

Audio ★★★★★

Extras ★★★★★

Overall ★★★★★

Mad Men: The Final Season – Part 1

Lionsgate → Region B BD

£25 Approx



Following in the footsteps of *The Sopranos*, Matthew Weiner's acclaimed drama about a New York ad agency is splitting its final season across two years. As such, this batch

of seven episodes feels a bit uneven, building slowly towards a barnstorming 'mid-season' finale that eventually puts all of the pieces in place for the show's climactic run. That said, it's still a superior breed of TV drama, with a sense of style that definitely benefits from these gorgeous 1.78:1-framed 1080p encodes. Typically superb extras include episode commentaries and historical featurettes.



The Killing Fields: 30th Anniversary Ed.

StudioCanal → Region B BD

£23 Approx



Springing from the pen of *Withnail & I* writer Bruce Robinson (based on eyewitness reports from two journalists),

The Killing Fields is an understandably angry and gut-wrenching account of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. It makes the jump to BD with a good-looking 1080p encode – although the DTS-HD MA 5.1 mix is too heavy-handed for our tastes (a more authentic LPCM stereo mix is included). A chat-track and interviews are offered, although the 1983 *Omnibus* documentary from the 2006 DVD is not.



La Dolce Vita

Nouveaux Pictures → Region B BD

£20 Approx



Federico Fellini's award-winning satire about the lives of the idle rich in 1960s Rome may stretch the

patience of some viewers with its three-hour running time. Yet those with a taste for lavish and intoxicating cinema will find plenty to savour about this Blu-ray's beautifully restored black-and-white 2.35:1 Full HD visuals (based on the same 4K restoration that served as the basis for Criterion's recent US disc). The only note of disappointment comes from the lack of extra features – all you get are a 19-min interview with actress Anita Ekberg and trailers for four other Fellini films.



KALIBRATE LIMITED

Projectors

From 1080P to 4K, UHP and LED we have projectors from Sony, JVC, Epson and Optoma.

Do you know which one suits your needs, by considering all the options:

ANSI and native contrast
Manual and auto iris
lumen output
throw distance
room conditions
screen choice



**PRE-SHIPING CHECKS
AVAILABLE ON ALL PROJECTOR
SALES!**



**PRICE DROP
ON JVC
DLA X500 &
X700**



**NATIVE 4K
PROJECTOR
FOR UNDER
£5,850.**

AUDIO

DOLBY ATMOS

**NOW PLAYING
IN OUR DEMO
ROOM**

Book your demonstration now!



**Alongside
AVRs from
Yamaha, Onkyo
Denon**



**In association with
speakers from**

**Atlantic
TECHNOLOGY**



WWW.KALIBRATE.CO.UK
EMAIL: SALES@KALIBRATE.CO.UK
TELEPHONE: 01883 460 225 OR 07947 007644

10 MINS FROM JCT 6 M25, AND M23

THX
CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL
ON STAFF



Samsung UHD TV Curved

Ultra High Definition 4K

ESSAV
.COM

NEW

ESSAV
.COM

**REWARD YOURSELF
& GET UP TO
£300**

On selected Samsung UHD or FHD Smart TVs
ADDITIONAL SAMSUNG
*Terms & conditions apply

FREE
UHD VIDEO PACK
WITH SELECTED
SAMSUNG
UHD TVs

SAMSUNG

HU8500 SERIES • CURVED 4K UHD TV

Introducing a breakthrough in TV viewing that will change the way you watch TV forever – the Samsung HU8500 Curved UHD. Wider viewing angles, pure and accurate colour reproduction and a sense of depth never experienced before are only possible on a curved Samsung screen, specifically shaped for UHD viewing at its very best.

55 65 78 **FREE 5 YEAR WARRANTY**

ESSAV
.COM



CLAIM
5 FREE 4K MOVIES
ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS
Offer Ends 23/12/2014

FREE
SONY SWF-BR100
WIRELESS SUB
ASK IN-STORE FOR DETAILS
Offer Ends 23/12/2014

SONY 4K

X8 SERIES • 4K UHD TV

The new Sony X8 series 4K UHD LED TV boasts four times more detail than Full HD, 4K gives stunningly natural images, not pixels. Dramatically higher image quality means that you can sit closer to the screen, filling more of your field of view until the screen disappears and you are enjoying an at-the-movies experience.

49 55 65 **FREE 5 YEAR WARRANTY**

Also Available
SONY X9 SERIES • 4K UHD TV



FREE
SONY
SOUNDBAR
OFFER
Offer Ends 31/12/2014

SONY

S90 SERIES • CURVED 4K UHD TV

The new S90 is Sony's first ever range of curved TVs. Available in two screen sizes: 65in and 75in, the S90 series boasts 4K Ultra HD resolution. Features and specifications include Sony's 4K X-Reality PRO picture engine, Triluminos colour technology, Motionflow XR800Hz, edge-lit LED backlighting, active 3D and a detachable Skype camera.

Sound is provided by Sony's new 4.2-channel multi-angle live speaker system which allows for "expansive, uncompromised 360-degree surround sound". Other features include Sony's Social Viewing for watching with friends over Skype, Live Football Mode, One-touch mirroring and Photo share.

FREE 5 YEAR WARRANTY **4K** 65 75



ESSAV
.COM

WHAT THE F? AWARDS 2014
Televisions
Best of the Best

SONY • W7 SERIES • FULL HD TV

The new Sony W7 Full HD LED TV series boasts pin sharp films and programmes all wrapped in clean Sony design. Full HD 1080p renders everything in stunning detail and with Motionflow technology even fast-moving action like games and sports flow across the screen. Sony's smart new remote also features a touchpad for seamless flicking through channels.

32 42 **FREE 5 YEAR WARRANTY**



ESSAV
.COM

PANASONIC • AX802 SERIES • 4K UHD TV

The new Panasonic AX802 4K LED TV series combines excellent 4K picture quality with versatile networking features and innovative functions in a stylish design. Includes Freetime built-in, so you can get the advantages of roll back TV (for the past seven days) and easy access to all major catch-up services directly from the Freetime programme guide.

50 58 65 **FREE 5 YEAR WARRANTY**



ESSAV
.COM

FREE
UHD VIDEO PACK
WITH SELECTED
SAMSUNG
UHD TVs

**REWARD YOURSELF
& GET UP TO
£300**

On selected Samsung UHD or FHD Smart TVs
ADDITIONAL SAMSUNG
*Terms & conditions apply

WHAT THE F? AWARDS 2014
Televisions
Best of the Best

SAMSUNG • HU7500 SERIES • 4K UHD TV

Samsung's HU7500 Ultra High Definition TV series produces the brightest, clearest images with four times the detail of Full HD to deliver an amazing viewing experience. With Colour Brilliance, colours come alive and images look naturally vibrant, as everything shown on the screen is expressed with brighter richer tones. The HU7500 is the must-have TV for your living room.

48 55 65 75 85 **FREE 5 YEAR WARRANTY**

FOR THE LATEST PRICES AND OFFERS VISIT WWW.SSAV.COM OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STORE



NEW

**£999
OR LESS**

OPTOMA • HD50 • DLP PROJECTOR

Created for movie-lovers, the new HD50 brings digital cinema quality images into the comfort of your home.



JVC • DLA-X500R • 4K D-ILA PROJECTOR

4K Projector with a high contrast ratio achieved by adopting an optical engine with new wire grid and 6th generation D-ILA device.

**£3999
OR LESS**



WHAT THE F? AWARDS 2014
Projectors
Best of the Best

**£2799
OR LESS**

SONY • VPL-HW55ES • SXRD PROJECTOR

A fantastic option for movie lovers who want an incredible cinematic experience at home, far beyond the reach of TV.

PLEASE NOTE: SOME BRANDS/PRODUCTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT ALL STORES. SPECIAL/ADDED VALUE OFFERS ARE NOT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ANY OTHER OFFER (NICWAOO). ADVERT VALID UNTIL 17/12/2014. E&OE

click & collect
NOW AVAILABLE

www.SSAV.com

SEVENoaks
SOUND & VISION



NEW £1199 OR LESS

ARCAM • FMJ UDP411 • 3D BLU-RAY PLAYER

With more than ten years of digital video experience, not to mention global recognition of its efforts, Arcam is proud to announce the arrival of its newest disc player, the UDP411.

Also Available: NAD T 567



ESSAV.COM

MARANTZ • UD7007 • UNIVERSAL DISC PLAYER

Enjoy exceptional sound and picture quality from many formats including SACD, DVD-Audio, 3D Blu-ray and your home network.

Also Available: MARANTZ UD5007



WHAT H.F.P. AWARDS 2014

NEW £550 OR LESS

PANASONIC • DMP-BDT700 • 3D BLU-RAY PLAYER

New top of the range model boasting up to 4K 60p output, HDMI 2.0 support, 7.1-channel analogue audio output, along with ground-breaking 4K Direct Chroma up-scaling.

Also Available: PANASONIC DMP-BDT260 & DMP-BDT460



NEW £599 OR LESS

PIONEER • BDP-LX58 • 3D BLU-RAY PLAYER

New universal disc player compatible with SACD and DVD-Audio discs plus lossless high-res support up to 192 kHz/24 bit resolution.

Also Available: PIONEER BDP-LX88



WHAT H.F.P. AWARDS 2014

NEW £550 OR LESS

SONY • BDP-S7200 • 3D BLU-RAY PLAYER

The new Sony BDP-S7200 3D Blu-ray Player with 4K upscaling and powerful smart features - it will be the centre piece of your home entertainment system.

Also Available: SONY BDP-S5200 & BDP-S6200



NEW £239 OR LESS

YAMAHA • BD-S677 • 3D BLU-RAY PLAYER

New 3D Blu-ray Player with Miracast and advanced network functions. This highly versatile player is compatible with the Yamaha smartphone/tablet control app and Dropbox.

Also Available: SAMSUNG BD-F7500



£3999 OR LESS

BUY FOR £3249
SAVE £750 WHEN YOU TRADE-IN
ANY HOME THEATRE PRODUCT
OFFER ENDS 31/12/2014 - ASK FOR DETAILS

ARCAM • FMJ AVR750 • AV RECEIVER

7.1-channel AV receiver combines 4K "Ultra HD" upscaling and 3D video capability with Arcam's legendary sound quality.

Also Available: ARCAM FMJ AVR380 & AVR450



NEW £599 OR LESS

NAD • T 748V2 • AV RECEIVER

The remarkable 7.1 channel NAD T 748V2 is an ideal choice for the most advanced home cinema and multi-room systems.

Also Available: NAD T 787



NEW £999 OR LESS

NAD • T 758 • AV RECEIVER

AV receiver featuring NAD's Modular Design Construction for future upgrades along with exceptional sound quality.

Also Available: NAD T 777



NEW £1299 OR LESS



DENON • AVR-X4100W • AV RECEIVER

AV receiver with Wi-Fi, AirPlay and Bluetooth built-in plus Spotify Connect and Dolby Atmos® for immaculate audio.

Also Available: DENON AVR-X2100W & AVR-X3100W



NEW £999 OR LESS



ONKYO • TX-NR838 • AV RECEIVER

New 7.2-channel Network receiver supporting Dolby Atmos® upgradability, multidimensional sound plus Ultra HD streaming.

Also Available: ONKYO TX-NR636 & TX-NR3030



NEW £1399 OR LESS



PIONEER • SC-LX58 • AV RECEIVER

New 9.2-channel Network receiver with with Class D Amplification, Wi-Fi, AirPlay, DLNA, Bluetooth and Dolby Atmos® upgradability.

Also Available: PIONEER VSX-924 & SC-LX88



NEW £499 OR LESS

WHAT H.F.P. AWARDS 2014

SONY • STR-DN1050 • AV RECEIVER

7.1-channel AV receiver with Bluetooth and NFC compatibility, for instant wireless playback from any compatible device.

Also Available: SONY STR-DA2800ES



NEW £559 OR LESS

YAMAHA • RX-V677 • AV RECEIVER

New highly capable and versatile 7.2-channel Network AV receiver with AirPlay and Spotify Connect.

Also Available: YAMAHA RX-V377 & RX-V477



NEW £1999 OR LESS



YAMAHA • RX-A3040 • AV RECEIVER

New AV receiver with built-in Wi-Fi, 11.2 channel expandability, highest grade construction and Dolby Atmos® upgradability.

Also Available: YAMAHA RX-A1040 & RX-A2040

FOR THE LATEST PRICES AND OFFERS VISIT WWW.SSAV.COM OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STORE

Real Stores

Sevenoaks Sound & Vision have 26 stores nationwide with plans to open more during 2014. Each carries the best in home cinema and Hi-Fi equipment on display, ready for you to watch, listen to and compare in our dedicated demonstration rooms.

Real Products

A wide selection of products from the world's leading manufacturers is in stock and available for you to take home. We also offer a delivery and installation service as well as a convenient on-line click and reserve option for many of our products.

Real People

Our staff are friendly, knowledgeable and passionate about music and film and the equipment needed to get the most out of your collection. They will be delighted to assist you in making the right selection to ensure you enjoy your system for years to come.

Real Value

Fantastic value for money is our aim. Although we remain independent, you will be pleasantly surprised just how competitive we can be - with the added benefit of seeing, hearing and touching the product before you buy, and someone to help if things go wrong.



www.SSAV.com

BLUESOUND HI-FI FOR A WIRELESS GENERATION

The new multi-room wireless streaming system from Bluesound offers high-resolution 24-bit playback. There are five components in the Bluesound range, available in gloss black or gloss white, which can be controlled using iOS or Android apps on a smartphone or tablet.

PRICES START FROM £399



CANTON • DM 50 • SOUNDBASE

The Canton DM 50 sets a new standard for TV sound. Intended to be positioned under a TV's pedestal stand, the DM 50 creates a convincing, room filling sound.



SONOS THE WIRELESS HI-FI SYSTEM

The Sonos Wireless HiFi System delivers all the music on earth, in every room, with deep, richly textured sound.

One year of music included.
Buy any Sonos player and claim 365 days of Deezer Premium+ worth over £100



PRICES START FROM £169



Q ACOUSTICS • MEDIA 4 • SOUNDBAR

The new Q Acoustics Media 4 is a high performance Soundbar designed to deliver high fidelity reproduction of music, and high quality audio from a TV or set top box, tablets and smartphones.



KEF • E305 • SPEAKER PACKAGE

The E Series packs uniquely advanced technologies in highly distinctive satellite speakers and a powered subwoofer.



MONITOR AUDIO • RADIUS R90HT1 • SPEAKER PACKAGE

Award-winning speaker package comprising four Radius 90 satellites, Radius 200 centre speaker and Radius 390 subwoofer.



KEF • R100 5.1 • SPEAKER PACKAGE

Comprises four R100 speakers, an R200C centre speaker and R400B active subwoofer. Great for both home cinema and music.



B&W • MT-60D • SPEAKER PACKAGE

Speaker package combining M-1 speakers with the stunning power and control of a PV1D subwoofer. Available in a matt black or white.



YAMAHA • SRT-1000 • SOUNDBASE

Enjoy richly realistic and powerful sound just by placing it under your TV! Surround sound system featuring Digital Sound Projector technology. Supports Bluetooth® and a dedicated app for smartphone control.

YAMAHA • YSP-2500 DIGITAL SOUND PROJECTOR

Reproduces overwhelmingly real presence and impact-filled bass sound. Two-unit YSP with ultra-refined design and high-grade aluminium chassis. Bluetooth® equipped, capable of wireless music play and App control.



ONKYO • SKH-410 • DOLBY ATMOS ENABLED SPEAKERS

A convenient and affordable way to unlock the full Dolby Atmos sound experience without the need to install in-ceiling speakers.



KEF • R50 • DOLBY ATMOS ENABLED SPEAKERS

Designed to sit above freestanding or wall-mounted speakers allowing you to enjoy Dolby Atmos at home.

REL • S2 SUBWOOFER

Fast, tuneful, fun and exceptionally dynamic, the REL S2 permits those with limited space or compact speakers to enjoy the benefits of Serie S performance.



Best Independent Retailer (Large) Consumer Electronics
Award Winner 2014

Stores Nationwide

We have a national network of stores and a hard-won reputation for outstanding customer service.

Website

Visit our website for a streamlined on-line experience with an outstanding product selection plus the latest product news and store information.

Bishop's Stortford • 01279 506576

Bristol • 0117 974 3727

Brighton **NEW** 01273 733338

Bromley 020 8290 1988

Cambridge • 01223 304770

Chelsea • 020 7352 9466

Cheltenham • 01242 241171

Chorleywood • 0845 5046364

Epsom • 01372 720720

Exeter • 01392 218895

Guildford 01483 536666

Holborn • 020 7837 7540

Kingston • 020 8547 0717

Leeds (Wetherby) 01937 586886

Loughton • 020 8532 0770

Maidstone 01622 686366

Norwich • 01603 767605

Oxford 01865 241773

Reading • 0118 959 7768

Sevenoaks 01732 459555

Sheffield • 0114 255 5861

Southampton • 023 8033 7770

Tunbridge Wells 01892 531543

Weybridge 01932 840859

Witham (Essex) 01376 501733

Yeovil • 01935 700078

VISIT WWW.SSAV.COM FOR STORE ADDRESS DETAILS, OPENING HOURS AND BRANDS STOCKED

*THESE STORES ARE FRANCHISED AND OPERATE UNDER A LICENCE AGREEMENT TO SEVENOAKS SOUND & VISION

Please Note: Some brands/products are not available at all stores. Special/added value offers are not in conjunction with any other offer (NICWAOO).

ADVERT VALID UNTIL 17/12/2014. E&OE

SEVENOAKS

SOUND & VISION

SELECT

→ **GEAR GUIDE** **TELEVISIONS** From entry-level 40in LEDs to flagship 4K monsters
BLU-RAY PLAYERS Which deck rules the roost? **PROJECTORS** It's time to blow up your video!
AV RECEIVERS 5.1, 7.1, 9.2 – we've got all the options covered **SPEAKERS** Killer surround sound setups
for all rooms and budgets **PVRs** Including super-slim Freeview boxes and Sky+HD **AND MORE!**



HCC RATINGS KEY...

Outstanding	★★★★★
Above average	★★★★☆
Acceptable	★★★☆☆
Disappointing	★★★☆☆
Dire	★★★☆☆

TOP 10 TELEVISIONS

All prices are approx and may have changed

**Sony KD-65X9005B** → £3,600

★★★★★

A groundbreaking set from Sony. The 'Wedge' cabinet design affords room for a best-in-class audio performance from the side-mounted speakers, while imagery is hard to fault, with crisp 4K visuals and impressive motion. *HCC #236*

**Samsung UE65HU8500** → £4,000 ★★★★★

This second-gen 4K flagship is a first-rate (curved) flatscreen with colour-rich, lethally-sharp images. The external connections box provides welcome futureproofing. *HCC #234*

**Samsung UE55HU7500** → £2,300 ★★★★★

Don't want the curved form or higher price of the HU8500 range? Then step down to this flat model. No One Connect box, but otherwise it's equally impressive in PQ terms. *HCC #239*

**Sony KDL-50W829** → £900 ★★★★★

Impressively affordable, Sony's 50in LED stands out courtesy of brilliant motion handling and sharp Full HD imagery. The new 2014 user interface offers a few Smart tricks, too. *HCC #233*

**Panasonic TX-42AS600** → £430 ★★★★★

An example of the value that can be found in modern-day Full HD sets. This 42-incher offers the best elements of Panasonic's Smart system, dynamic images and a great price. *HCC #240*

**John Lewis 55JL9000** → £1,600 ★★★★★

The department store enters the bigscreen arena with this LG WebOS-powered Smart TV with clever, integrated soundbar design and punchy HD visuals. *HCC #238*

**Samsung UE40H6400** → £650 ★★★★★

This mid-market TV will probably sell like hotcakes. It ignores 4K in favour of Full HD, and combines a pleasing AV performance with plenty of useful Smart features. *HCC #236*

**Finlux 50F8075-T** → £600 ★★★★★

The best screen we've seen yet from the direct-retail corp, this 50-incher matches its affordability with a great user interface and solid, but not awe-inspiring, HD visuals. *HCC #234*

**Panasonic TX-50AX802** → £1,600 ★★★★★

This second-gen 4K TV again offers HDMI 2.0 and DisplayPort connectivity, joined by a well-contrasted colour-rich image and elegant design. Netflix 4K support added by firmware. *HCC #237*

**Sony KDL-55W955** → £1,600 ★★★★★

Top of the Japanese giant's 1080p line up, the W955 offers excellent motion handling and great sonics, but is held back a tad by backlight uniformity errors and sluggish operation. *HCC #234*

TECH INFO: TELEVISIONS



What? No plasma?: The TV market is now dominated by LED-lit LCD screens, reaching sizes up to 90in. Manufacture and sale of plasma display panels (PDPs), which previously came into play above 42in, has all but ceased, although you may still find some end-of-line stock. With LED comes newer technologies. 4K models with a native resolution of 3,840 x 2,160 should at least be on your audition list if you're thinking of a new display; curved models, from the likes of Samsung and LG, are also a consideration if you want to really impress the neighbours...



Active or Passive: At the beginning of the 3D revolution, most TVs featured the Active system that uses relatively expensive, powered 3D specs to deliver Full HD images to each eye. Passive 3D TVs, which are increasingly common and now sold by LG, Philips, Toshiba, Sony and Panasonic, have a filter over the screen and use non-powered specs with polarising filters. The glasses are cheap as chips, but the resolution of Full HD 3D is halved to 540 lines horizontally (but remains at 1,920 vertically). Glasses-free 3D, heralded by Toshiba's ZL2 TV, hasn't caught on.

TOP 5 BLU-RAY MOVIES

**The LEGO Movie 3D**

A fantastic family blockbuster (complete with LEGO versions of Batman and Superman), this gorgeous-looking 'toon packs a 5.1 punch and enough smart gags to keep you laughing all the way to the toy shop.

★★★★★

**A Hard Day's Night**

A brand-new 4K restoration adds plenty of sparkle to this iconic musical flick – the 1.75:1 Full HD image is faultless, while remixed 5.1 audio provides plenty of foot-tapping fun. Oodles of extras for Beatles fans, too.

★★★★★

**Captain America: The Winter Soldier**

Short of extras, but everything else here is spot on – Marvel's sequel outdoes the original with its paranoid plot-line, and the DTS-HD 7.1 track oozes bass weight and separation.

★★★★★

**Godzilla 3D**

Gareth Edwards' monster reboot ensures that the titular creature easily lives up to his billing as the 'king of the monsters' on Blu-ray with the inclusion of one of the most powerful and dynamic 7.1 mixes you'll ever hear.

★★★★★

**Gravity 3D**

Alfonso Cuarón's sci-fi flick rewrites the rulebook on movie sound design, and stakes a claim to the 3D crown. A disc you'll return to again and again when you want to test your system – nice extras as well.

★★★★★

Top 10 BLU-RAY PLAYERS

All prices are approx and may have changed

- 1**  **Oppo BDP-103EU → £500 ★★★★★**
 Oppo's first deck for two years was worth waiting for. The universal BDP-103EU features a class-leading build and all manner of bonus goodies, including twin HDMI inputs. AV performance is faultless, and the onscreen menus are superb. A new model, the £600 BDP-103D, adds Darbee Visual Presence processing for you to play with. *HCC #215/#228*
- 2**  **Oppo BDP-105D → £1,000 ★★★★★**
 This heavyweight deck builds upon the premium picture performance of the BDP-103D with a wealth of audiophile upgrades – if you're serious about music, check it out. *HCC #234*
- 3**  **Sony BDP-S7200 → £220 ★★★★★**
 A Sony deck without the curious angular design, the BDP-S7200 offers SACD support, hi-res audio streaming and 4K upscaling that's worth investigation. Not too pricey, either. *HCC #239*
- 4**  **Panasonic DMP-BDT700 → £500 ★★★★★**
 Claiming THX-certified 4K upscaling and HDMI 2.0 60p passthrough, this mid-range deck from Panasonic is a good partner for a modern display. Great audio option, too. *HCC #237*
- 5**  **Samsung BD-H6500 → £130 ★★★★★**
 Our current fave bargain BD deck – actually Samsung's 'flagship' model – is packed with Smart features, including support for the brand's multiroom system, and super-quick in operation. *HCC #236*
- 6**  **Denon DBT-3313UD → £900 ★★★★★**
 As a 'transport', this universal deck lacks built-in decoders and analogue outs, but partner it with one of the brand's AVRs via Denon Link HD and you'll be rewarded. *HCC #217*
- 7**  **LG BP645 → £100 ★★★★★**
 An affordable, likeable offering from LG. The BP645 claims Spotify compatibility and Wi-Fi-enabled headphone listening among its bonus features. Slim but lightweight design. *HCC #236*
- 8**  **Sony BDP-S5200 → £100 ★★★★★**
 Using a compact bedroom-friendly design, Sony's quirky-looking deck is a good budget option, but not as Smart or as smooth to use as some of its price-point rivals. *HCC #236*
- 9**  **Pioneer BDP-160 → £130 ★★★★★**
 The successor to the BDP-150 adds integrated Wi-Fi, making media file playback simpler. The Smart cupboard is still practically empty, but SACD support softens the blow. *HCC #227*
- 10**  **Toshiba BDX5500 → £120 ★★★★★**
 The key attraction of Toshiba's £120 player (aside from its 3D, Miracast, 4K scaling and DLNA features) is its small form factor and vertical alignment. Good for space-tight setups. *HCC #238*

TECH INFO: BLU-RAY PLAYERS

Matching your deck to your AV receiver: Blu-ray decks are designed to deliver top-notch images but Blu-ray is also about enjoying superior quality sound. When choosing a player, bear in mind the connectivity and decoding features of your AV receiver. If you're still using an older model that doesn't offer HDMI inputs, then you'll need a Blu-ray player with multichannel analogue audio outputs to enjoy decoded hi-res surround sound formats. Similarly, older but still HDMI-equipped receivers may not be able to cope with 3D video signals, in which case you'll need a deck with dual HDMI outputs – one channelling audio to your receiver amp, the other piping video direct to your TV.

What about the PlayStation?: Sony's console still represents an easy path to hi-def heaven. For a low-budget home cinema system, the £200 PS3 Slim (160GB) makes a decent choice – especially if you like playing games (in 3D, if you fancy it). Control via a joystick is a pain, though, and the console runs more noisily than most BD spinners. The newer, more expensive PS4 is a much better gaming machine, but won't play CDs!



DEMO DELIGHT

Prometheus: Ridley Scott's return to the sci-fi genre is a treat for your senses, with a crystal-clear HD image and spine-tingling sonics. The 3D presentation of this outer-space horror is impressive too – it oozes depth and proves utterly immersive

oppo[®]
Blu-ray

At the top of everyone's shortlist



TOP 10 PROJECTORS

All prices are approx
and may have changed**Sony VPL-VW500ES** → £8,800

★★★★★

Sony's second-gen 4K projector is around half the price of its VPL-VW1100ES and comes with HDMI 2.0 chipper and Triluminos colour wizardry. Auditioning this classy PJ is a no-brainer. *HCC #228*

**JVC DLA-X500R** → £5,000 ★★★★★

Armed with a more adept third-generation of the brand's proprietary e-shift technology, the X500R continues JVC's winning ways – contrast rich, sharp and full of tweaks. *HCC #232*

**Epson EH-TW7200** → £1,900 ★★★★★

Priced to appeal to those unable to dabble in the £3,000 market, Epson's mid-ranger is a great purchase. No frame interpolation on offer, but colours, contrast and brightness impress. *HCC #232*

**JVC DLA-X700R** → £7,300 ★★★★★

A hefty chunk more expensive than the X500R, but with an improved contrast performance (and more flexible installation options) that will reward those who splash the cash. *HCC #238*

**Optoma HD50** → £1,000 ★★★★★

With a retweaked user interface that improves upon previous Optoma light-cannons, the 12V-trigger-toting HD50 is a brilliant budget buy. *HCC #239*

**BenQ W1070+** → £650 ★★★★★

An accomplished low-budget DLP model, the W1070+ offers ISF-certified calibration and a 12V trigger in conjunction with a sharp, bright, detailed performance. Bit of a bargain! *HCC #240*

**Philips Screeneo HDP1590** → £1,500 ★★★★★

Neatly designed, the Screeneo offers ultra-short throw projection thrills, albeit at 720p (and the DVB tuner is SD). Punchy speakers and networking skills complete a nice package. *HCC #233*

**Sony VPL-HW55ES** → £2,800 ★★★★★

Not one of Sony's 4K models, but this keenly priced Full HD projector delivers where it counts, with solid calibration options, simple setup and brilliant 2D visuals. No 12V trigger. *HCC #230*

**Epson EH-TW9200W** → £3,000 ★★★★★

A brilliant mid-range projector with wireless HD transmission and ISF certification, yet the noise generated when running in 'Normal' lamp mode could be a concern for some. *HCC #231*

**Optoma HD30** → £1,100 ★★★★★

A step up from its previous HD25, this claims an increased contrast ratio and offers a pleasing bigscreen performance. UI could be better, and zoom is somewhat limited. *HCC #233*

TECH INFO: PROJECTORS



Installation: Although projectors can be temporarily placed on a cupboard, stand or shelf situated at the rear of the room (use the adjustable feet on its base to level the image so that it aligns with the screen), a much better long-term solution is to mount it on your ceiling with an appropriate bracket. Projectors can be quite heavy, though, so it's important to ensure that the bracket is attached firmly – ideally, it should be secured to a joist. Position your PJ so that an imaginary line from its lens to the opposite side of the room hits the screen exactly half-way along its width. The location of your screen should therefore dictate where your projector is. A decent tape-measure or laser pointer will help you to determine the position.

Throw distance: Throw distance specifies the distance between the projector and screen for a focused image of given size. As the vast majority of projectors are equipped with a zoom lens, minimum and maximum throw distances are often specified – say, 3.01m to 6.08m for a 100in. 16:9 image. Shorter throw distances are ideal for smaller rooms, and longer ones for larger rooms. Simple.

Throw ratio: Sometimes, a manufacturer will quote a throw ratio rather than a throw distance. This is basically the throw distance divided by the image width. To get the projected image size, divide the distance between projector and screen by the specified figure. Once again, the inclusion of a zoom lens means that upper and lower figures are usually specified.

Award-winning home cinemas

At Cyberhomes our home cinemas aren't just about the amazing picture and jaw-dropping sound. We also implement the lighting, the seating, the intuitive control system from Savant, Crestron or Control4, and so much more.

For details visit www.cyberhomes.co.uk/hcc



CUSTOM
ELECTRONIC
DESIGN &
INSTALLATION
ASSOCIATION



Home cinema design and installation • Lighting control systems • Multi-room audio and video • Home automation
CCTV and security • Data and communication networks • Occupancy simulation • Heating and air conditioning

0845 094 2718

hello@cyberhomes.co.uk

www.cyberhomes.co.uk

Top 10 SPEAKERS

All prices are approx
and may have changed**B&W 683 Theatre 5.1** → £2,750

★★★★★

The first step on the floorstanding ladder in B&W's speaker stable, the revamped 600 Series incorporates new tweeter and bass driver designs and offers absurd value for money. Not the prettiest cabinets, but you really won't care. *HCC #234*

**KEF R Series 7.1** → £6,500 ★★★★★

A 7.1 array mixing dipolar and direct surrounds, this authoritative package takes its cues from KEF's Blade concept speaker and offers faultless, largescale home cinema sonics. *HCC #217*

**B&W MT-60D** → £2,000 ★★★★★

This 5.1 set sits at the upper end of the sub/sat market, but buyers are rewarded by a potent performance, with the PVID subwoofer dazzling in particular. They look lovely, too. *HCC #212*

**DALI Rubicon LCR 5.1** → £6,275 ★★★★★

Trickle-down tech from DALI's high-end Epicon speakers (including ribbon/dome hybrid tweeters) squeezed into on-wall cabinets – supremely adept with music and movies. *HCC #238*

**Wharfedale Diamond 100 HCP** → £950 ★★★★★

Yet another excellent affordable package from Wharfedale, the Diamond 100 HCP offers a sound quality beyond what you might expect from its sub-£1,000 ticket. Maturely styled. *HCC #224*

**Kreisel Sound Quattro 7.2** → £8,500 ★★★★★

Mixing two mammoth woofers with some surprisingly manageable multi-tweeter speakers (including TriFX surrounds) this US package is supremely assured. *HCC #232*

**Artcoustic Spitfire SL 7.2** → £17,000 ★★★★★

Slimmed-down cabinets now even easier to install on-wall or behind a screen, with a multi-driver design ensuring they're easy to drive to high SPLs. Ideal for dedicated rooms. *HCC #233*

**Tannoy Precision Series 5.1** → £4,450 ★★★★★

These speakers' classic look belies the brand's hi-fi heritage, but this multichannel setup works wonders with movies, too – a rich, large and dynamic sound is on offer. *HCC #226*

**Monitor Audio Radius R90HTI** → £1,500 ★★★★★

The long-loved Radius speakers have been revamped with new drivers and rear ports, and this 5.1 set provides a clear, detailed sound with plenty of heft. Looks good in white, too. *HCC #230*

**Roth Oli RA 5.1** → £850 ★★★★★

A floorstanding array with neat design and reassuring build, this value-for-money pack delivers an impressive slice of scale to go with its full-range prowess. *HCC #233*

TECH INFO: SPEAKERS



Centre speaker: Handles most of the dialogue and onscreen effects. Should be positioned above or below the screen as close to it as possible. Of course, if you're using a projector screen, it should ideally be placed behind it.

Front speakers: Left and right speakers should be positioned either side of the screen, in line with the centre. Turn the speakers in slightly to face the listener if there isn't an even movement of sound across the front of the room.

Subwoofer: Can be positioned wherever it sounds best or can be tucked out of sight due to the non-directional nature of low-frequency signals. Be aware that close positioning in corners or next to walls can create a boomy effect.

Surrounds: Position alongside the listener, pointing in or slightly behind the ears for a good surround effect. The back wall is not a good position for surrounds – it is, in fact, where you should locate the sixth and seventh speakers (rears) in a traditional 7.1 array.

DEMO DELIGHT

Godzilla: Hollywood tackles the iconic aquatic beastie once again, and the Blu-ray comes armed with a DTS-HD MA 7.1 mix that's dynamic, powerful, aggressive, detailed and expansive from start to finish. Check out Chapter 8's M.U.T.O. circling sequence for a masterclass in precision and control.

HOME CINEMA | MULTI-ROOM AUDIO | MULTI-ROOM SKY & HDTV | LIGHTING CONTROL | HOME AUTOMATION

For a demonstration in our showroom call 01922 623000 | www.getthebigpicture.co.uk

THE
big
PICTURE



Certified
Electronic
Systems
Professionals



Certified
Kaleidescape
Specialist
installer



Home
Acoustics
Alliance
Certified



® Imaging
Science
Foundation
Certified



Authorized
GOLD
Dealer 2013



TOP 10 AV RECEIVERS/AV PROCESSORS

All prices are approx
and may have changed**Yamaha RX-A3040** → £2,000

A superb flagship AVR, this dovetails nine-channel amplification (and 11-channel processing) with a fluid, dynamic sonic signature and slick operation. Design and build impress, and it's Atmos ready for when you are. *HCC #239*

**Anthem MRX-510** → £1,700 ★★★★★

The Canadian brand returns in style with an AVR that ignores streaming/networking features but boasts supreme room EQ and eats movie soundtracks for breakfast. *HCC #232*

**Arcam AVR750** → £4,000 ★★★★★

If all you want from an AV receiver is vast power and effortless performance, this high-end 7.1-channel beast is tailored to you. Little bonus features beyond audio networking. *HCC #225*

**Krell Foundation** → £6,500 ★★★★★

One of the US marque's more affordable offerings, the Foundation is a seven-channel processor that delivers an insightful, smooth and epic sound. And it looks fab. *HCC #224*

**Marantz NR-1605** → £600 ★★★★★

A brilliant option for those cowed by full-form AVRs, the NR-1605 sees Marantz retool its slender line to include integrated Wi-Fi and Bluetooth. Agile, sprightly and easy to use. *HCC #239*

**Onkyo TX-NR838** → £1,000 ★★★★★

A nicely-specced mid-range AVR, offering 5.1.2 Atmos playback (as well as regular 7.1) in addition to HDCP 2.2 support, which will please future-gazers. Crisp-sounding sonics. *HCC #240*

**Primare SPA23** → £3,500 ★★★★★

A stripped-down five-channel amp that majors on sublime, and power-packed, multichannel delivery. Limited functionality, but that's not what this luxury slab is all about. *HCC #237*

**Pioneer VSX-924** → £500 ★★★★★

Pioneer's newest £500 model brings Bluetooth and Wi-Fi, an even better control app, HDMI 2.0 specification and under-the-hood tweaks. A great-value, great performer. *HCC #236*

**Yamaha RX-V577** → £500 ★★★★★

Loaded with DSP modes (some fun, some not) and Wi-Fi-enabled for audio streaming, this clean-sounding Yamaha is a great low-budget option. Bluetooth via optional dongle. *HCC #237*

**Sony STR-DN1050** → £500 ★★★★★

A fabulous user interface, smart design and excellent spatial imaging lend this Sony serious appeal, although we found the integrated Wi-Fi a bit flaky. *HCC #238*

TECH INFO: AV RECEIVERS



Tackling new heights: You may find your AV receiver offering Dolby Pro-Logic IIz, Audyssey DSX or DTS Neo: X post-processing – possibly all three. All of these can deliver two further Front Height channels, with the aim of adding weight and control to the front soundstage, particularly in terms of lifting the centre channel and adding scale to vertical surround effects – rainfall for example. The catch is that you will need to add two new physical speakers, mounted near your ceiling above the regular left and right channel cabinets, and make use of two of the receiver's channels of amplification. A newer alternative, Dolby Atmos, uses object-based encoded info rather than matrixed effects, for a more immersive experience. Atmos Blu-rays are slowly appearing, as are add-on speakers that work around the need for in-ceiling models.

How much power?: Many of the mass-market AV receiver manufacturers are involved in a specifications race to see who can say their model is the most powerful, which can be confusing for consumers. For instance, both Krell's £7,000 S-1500 seven-channel power amp and Yamaha's £500 RX-V675 both claim 7 x 150W – the important part is that Krell's figure is into an eight-ohm load with all channels driven, and that Yamaha's is with one channel into a four-ohm load, which is hardly a real-world situation. The best advice is ignore the numbers game and get a demo of your desired AVR with the same, or similar, speakers that you intend to partner it with.

**JustAddPopcorn**

'Seamlessly integrating technology into your home'

For more information or to book a consultation visit:
www.justaddpopcorn.co.uk or call 01424 870763



- Bespoke Cinema Rooms
- Media Rooms
- Gaming Rooms
- Garage Conversions
- Loft Conversions
- Multi Room Audio & Video
- Control Systems
- Lighting & Heating Solutions

Top 10 SUBWOOFERS

All prices are approx
& may have changed**SVS SB-2000** → £650 ★★★★★

This follow up to the SB-1000, which incorporates a new 12in driver and revamped Sledge DSP amplifier, offers immense value for money. A mid-sized woofer that imbibes your Blu-rays with potent LFE, the SB-2000 sounds quick and taut, and is a perfect introduction to what a truly good sub can accomplish. *HCC #233*

**JL Audio Fathom F212** → £5,900 ★★★★★

The US brand arrives in the UK in style – this 2 x 12in, 3,000W brute not only looks gorgeous, it's capable of a mindblowing performance. Got a big room? Get one of these! *HCC #214*

**Tannoy TS2.12** → £550 ★★★★★

The TS2.12 is easily Tannoy's best woofer yet – using a 12in driver (opposite a passive 12in cone) and 500W amp to deliver a rich bass performance. Affordable and good-looking, too. *HCC #208*

**REL S-5** → £1,600 ★★★★★

A step up from the T series (below), this 12in model is large and weighty, with a performance level to match. Fast and tight but capable of dropping very low indeed. *HCC #234*

**Bowers & Wilkins DB1** → £3,250 ★★★★★

Featuring a bipolar arrangement of 12in drivers powered by 1,000W of amplification, B&W's stylish flagship sub is a faultless performer, offering both musicality and sheer muscle. *HCC #197*

**REL T-7** → £650 ★★★★★

The T-7 uses an 8in driver in tandem with a 10in passive radiator, and features simultaneous speaker-level and LFE inputs and Class A/B amplification. An excellent all-rounder. *HCC #223*

**Bowers & Wilkins PVID** → £1,200 ★★★★★

One of the coolest-looking subs on the planet, B&W's PVID uses DSP trickery to craft an opulent low-end performance. The touch-sensitive OLED display is pure class. *HCC #212*

**JL Audio E-Sub e112** → £2,050 ★★★★★

This 12in, 1,500W model from JL Audio's 'entry-level' line seems pricey, but its performance, design and tuning options make the investment oh-so worthwhile. *HCC #240*

**REL Habitat 1** → £1,300 ★★★★★

With its LongBow wireless system and wall-mountable design, REL's newest woofer is aimed at those seeking discreet bass. Twin 6.5in drivers work fast and with considerable grip. *HCC #231*

**SVS SB12-NSD** → £650 ★★★★★

A 12in driver squeezed into the smallest enclosure possible, the SB12-NSD packs a 400W Sledge amp and offers a weighty yet fast and accurate sound. Looks a bit bland, though. *HCC #223*

TECH INFO



Why use more than one sub?: Using two subwoofers (or perhaps four) should, in theory, bring huge rewards in terms of bass performance. But remember that LFE is a tricky beast to control. Running two subs may simply double problems in your room like room boom and suck-outs, where outgoing and reflected bass sounds cancel each other out. If you have some flexibility in where you place subwoofers, trial and error may well throw up some interesting results. The acoustics wizard Floyd E Toole (his book *Sound Reproduction: The Acoustics and Psychoacoustics of Loudspeakers and Rooms* is fine bedtime reading) suggests one LFE sub to either side of the room may be best for accuracy while placing them in the front corners would be best for overall bass power. Yet there is no hard and fast rule as to what will work best for every room, and you may find that simply using one (large) subwoofer is preferable as it's the easiest to get sounding right.

DEMO DELIGHT

The LEGO Movie: This colourful, great-looking animation from Warner Bros is a visual treat on Blu-ray, and matched by a 5.1 DTS-HD Master Audio mix that revels in its use of the LFE channel. Stonking bass is the order of the day here – the bangs, thumps and explosions of the manic 'toon action are underpinned by a forceful, full-bodied low-end that's guaranteed to get the most out of your subwoofer.

Top 5 HD GAMES

**Ultra Street Fighter IV**

New characters, stages and gameplay mechanics make this update of the four-year-old title the best beat-'em up around. If you're having a family row over what film to watch, this is the best way to settle it.

★★★★★

**Forza Motorsport 5**

This game's headline trick is delivering its huge car collection and decent selection of tracks in wonderfully detailed 1080p at a silky smooth 60fps. That it's not quite perfect – dodgy AI, for a start – is less important.

★★★★★

**Grand Theft Auto V**

Rockstar's newest slice of car-jacking, gun-wielding fun is absolutely massive in both scale and ambition – a big-budget game that will leave a big grin on your face. Graphically gorgeous, and the 5.1 mix isn't bad, either.

★★★★★

**Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag**

This sequel takes to the high seas for piratical fun, with an enormous open world, absorbing gameplay, beautiful graphics and a soundtrack packed with well-realised ambient effects.

★★★★★

**Titanfall**

EA redefines the online shooter with this breathtaking arena blaster that ups the ante on the competition with its fluid run-and-gun mechanics, giant mechs you can take control of and gorgeous graphics.

★★★★★

TOP 10 ACCESSORIES

All prices are approx and may have changed

- 1 Now TV box → £10 ★★★★★**
 An unqualified bargain, this Wi-Fi VOD streamer from Sky (and built upon Roku hardware) brings BBC iPlayer, Demand 5 and the Roku Channel Store to any HDMI-toting telly, plus subscription access to Sky Movies and Sky Sports. The quality of the adaptive bitrate streaming is impressive, and the £10 tag gets you P&P and an HDMI cable. *HCC #226*
- 2 Devolo dLAN 650 Triple+ starter pack → £120 ★★★★★**
 This package makes Powerline networking fast (claimed at up to 600Mbps) and easy. The three-port Ethernet extender is sleekly designed, and provides a regular plug socket, too. *HCC #239*
- 3 Dune HD Base 3D → £250 ★★★★★**
 A media player for the AV enthusiast. Full-width and fully-featured, it provides support for 3D BD rips and much more, with a slick user interface and plenty of connectivity. *HCC #235*
- 4 Sony MDR-HW700DS → £450 ★★★★★**
 Comfy cans supplied with an HDMI surround processor, enabling multichannel audio to be fed to a virtual 9.1-channel soundstage. The effect is superb – great for late nights. *HCC #234*
- 5 HDAnywhere mHub → £1,000 ★★★★★**
 An impressively flexible multiroom solution that allows HD video and audio to be sent via Cat cable to four displays from multiple sources. Includes HDMI mirroring, too. Handy. *HCC #240*
- 6 Philips Hue → £180 ★★★★★**
 These Wi-Fi enabled lightbulbs might be expensive (this £180 starter pack includes two, plus the Wi-Fi bridge) but making your own multicoloured lighting scheme is a blast. *HCC #220*
- 7 Monitor Audio Airstream A100 → £400 ★★★★★**
 Partner your TV with the speakers of your choice with this networked, AirPlay-streaming two-channel amp. Great, sleek design – bit awkward to control, though. *HCC #238*
- 8 Roku Streaming Stick → £50 ★★★★★**
 Adopting the same form as Google's Chromecast, this HDMI stick gives full access to Roku's lengthy channel list and enables content sharing from a smartphone. Great for old TVs. *HCC #235*
- 9 Microsoft Xbox One → £430 ★★★★★**
 Not as graphically potent as the PS4 (below) but the new Xbox lives up to its billing as a home entertainment hub – voice control and multi-tasking tricks prove very useful. *HCC #230*
- 10 Sony PlayStation 4 → £350 ★★★★★**
 The PS4 offers a killer gaming experience, with the under-the-hood power resulting in great-looking games. 3D Blu-ray playback has now been added via firmware. *HCC #229*

TECH INFO: MEDIA PLAYERS



What about my TV?: Many flatscreen TVs from the major brands (Sony, Samsung, Panasonic, LG, Toshiba and Sharp) also incorporate media player functionality, using Ethernet or Wi-Fi to stream from your home network, or from plugged-in USB drives. Most modern Blu-ray players offer this, too. However, file support is rarely as extensive as on dedicated devices from the likes of Western Digital and A.C. Ryan, and our experience shows some are more adept at playback from USB than over a network. Nor (obviously) is a TV or BD player portable. If your media collection extends beyond JPEGs and MP3s into lossless audio rips and esoteric HD video formats, then a standalone player is a good investment.

Storage: You can, if you really want, store all your files on a plethora of USB drives, or on your PC, but it's best to get a NAS (Network Attached Storage) device for simplified sharing of your media across a network with



multiple players, such as one from Netgear's ReadyNAS range (pictured). These dedicated devices often offer RAID array file backup, and are managed via browser software. Storage capacity can be anything from 1TB to 12TB and beyond.

TOP 5 BLU-RAY/DVD BOX SETS


The Walking Dead: The Complete Fourth Season

The popular horror series really hits its stride with this chilling collection of 16 episodes, and the Blu-ray release is no slouch either, mixing killer lossless audio and in-depth extras.

★★★★★


True Detective: Season One

HBO's award-winning eight-part crime series starring Hollywood heavyweights Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson arrives on BD looking great. Essential viewing.

★★★★★


The Werner Herzog Collection

Eight discs packing 18 of the filmmakers' earlier flicks (from 1967 to 1987). The HD presentations are strong, and Herzog pops up on numerous commentary tracks.

★★★★★


Video Nasties: The Definitive Guide Part Two

Superb three-disc DVD package partnering a feature-length documentary about the 'video nasties' craze of the 80s/90s with trailers/analysis of 83 of the controversial films in question.

★★★★★


Twin Peaks: The Entire Mystery

Both seasons of the US cult TV series and the prequel flick ...Fire Walk With Me are given a fan-pleasing 10-disc BD release, sporting 7.1 DTS-HD audio and a treasure trove of bonus bits.

★★★★★

BHFUnlimited

.co.uk

Home Cinema Screen Specialists

Crosby & Bown

- Glass Bead & Matt White
- 4:3 & 16:9
- Full HD Compatible
- Full Remote Control



From
Just £69.95

Huge Range & Next Day Delivery

01636 639 900

For competitive quotes email
sales@bhfunlimited.co.uk

Starscape

Fibre Optic & LED Lighting



Growing numbers of professional home cinema installers in the UK are turning to Starscape for fibre optic and LED solutions, not to mention our professional customers in Belgium, Switzerland, Portugal, South Africa, the Czech Republic and South Africa.

Photo: Artcoustic SA and Sphere Custom Design

However, we're also proud of the friendly, no-jargon service that we offer DIY home cinema enthusiasts. Our fibre optic and LED lighting can add that finishing touch to your room, and you'll find it surprisingly affordable, and easy to install. Creative use of lighting can make all the difference between just a room with a large TV/projector and a truly distinctive and personal space.



To learn how fibre optic and LED lighting can feature in your project phone 01289 332900 and speak to John or Peter, or e-mail info@starscape.co.uk. See the website for step-by-step home cinema lighting project reports.



Woodside

Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland. TD15 2SY.

E: info@starscape.co.uk T: +44 (1289) 332900 www.starscape.co.uk

home technology at your fingertips

Progressive Home Technology systems give you control of music and TV, lights and blinds, heating and security, all at the touch of a button

PROGRESSIVE
HOME TECHNOLOGY

Progressive Audio Visual Ltd
Unit A4 Speldhurst Business Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0AQ

01892 860801
progressive-ht.com

imagination with practical application...



Call **01922 623000** for a demonstration or be inspired at
www.getthebigpicture.co.uk

HOME CINEMA • MULTI-ROOM AUDIO • MULTI-ROOM SKY & HDTV • LIGHTING CONTROL • HOME AUTOMATION

THE BIG PICTURE. MULTI-AWARD WINNING HOME TECHNOLOGY SPECIALISTS



TOP 5 PVRs

**Virgin Media TiVo, £subscription**

This triple-tuner PVR offers ultimate recording flexibility, useful features – you can undelete deleted shows! – and awesome TiVo functionality. A no brainer if you're in a cable area

★★★★★

**Sky+HD, £subscription**

Sky's channel choice is second-to-none and its twin tuner 2TB PVR is a perfect partner. The recent EPG tweak is welcome and Anytime (the push VOD service) is brilliant for catching up on new movies

★★★★★

**Panasonic DMR-HW220, £250**

Panasonic's PVR mixes a 1TB hard drive with its Smart Viera functionality and media streaming – so at £250 it's an absolute steal, regardless of the uninspired design

★★★★★

**Pure Avalon 300R Connect, 1TB, £350**

Pure's debut Freeview+ HD offering is assured. While it can't match YouView for VOD content, the user interface here is unrivalled and four-way HDMI switching a welcome addition

★★★★★

**Panasonic DMR-BWT740, £500**

A 1TB Freeview+ twin-tuner PVR married to a BD player/burner = insane levels of recording/archiving flexibility. Ideal for programme hoarders, but not the slickest box to use

★★★★★

TOP 5 SOUNDBARS

**Yamaha YAS-103, £230**

Bluetooth-enabled and app-controllable, this single-enclosure solution boasts a great design and solid build. Audio from its 2.1-channel driver array is rich, clean and surprisingly potent

★★★★★

**Canton DM 50, £400**

This sturdily built soundbase speaker may lack HDMI inputs but makes up for it with Bluetooth streaming and a full-bodied 2.1-channel performance. Movies and music benefit from clarity and power

★★★★★

**Monitor Audio ASB-2, £1,000**

This premium proposition marries Monitor Audio's C-CAM drivers with AirPlay and DLNA music streaming. Performance is exemplary – powerful and polished in equal measure

★★★★★

**Philips HTL9100, £600**

A soundbar/sub that incorporates two removable side speakers to allow it to become a wireless 5.1 system, this Philips is a neat proposition. Easy to install and with a heavyweight sound.

★★★★★

**Q Acoustics Media 4, £400**

A no-nonsense offering from the speaker specialist, which ignores HDMI inputs and daft DSP modes in favour of creating a nuanced and impressively solid 2.1 soundscape. Punchy, controlled and well-built.

★★★★★

TOP 5 SYSTEMS

**Panasonic SC-BTT590, £630**

The use of new bamboo/charcoal drivers and noise-shaping tech pays dividends here, with a classy sound quality to match the wealth of features (3D BD, Smart TV and more)

★★★★★

**Samsung HT-H7750WM, £850**

The top-flight system from Samsung in 2014 uses tallboy speakers all around. Plenty of features here, and a fulsome 5.1 performance, but the build quality is a bit disappointing

★★★★★

**Harman/Kardon BDS470, £650**

Harman's 2.1 system eschews 'net TV and streaming features, but majors in heavyweight build quality and solid AV performance. We tested a 2.1 iteration – 5.1 is also available

★★★★★

**LG BH8220B, £650**

With its silver finish, this is a suitable one-box system to partner with LG's flatscreen TVs, with a commendable, if slightly lacking in HF finesse, sound. Additional features including CD-ripping to USB. Handy

★★★★★

**Panasonic SC-HTB570, £350**

A commendable slim-line 2.1 system that can also be clicked together to make a soundbar. The punchy wireless subwoofer does a lot of the work. Bluetooth music streaming is onboard

★★★★★

HOME CINEMA

Choice

ISSUE
#242 ON SALE
Dec 11

→ IN THE NEXT ISSUE

2014 Movie Awards: We roundup our favourite Blu-ray and DVD releases of the last year

Dolby Atmos: Thinking of an upgrade? Check out our Dos and Don'ts!

Picture palace: Is this the UK's best home cinema?

→ HARDWARE

The finest AV kit of 2014, including: Monitor Audio Silver Sony KD-65X9005B Yamaha RX-V577 Samsung UE65HU8500 JVC DLA-X500R REL Habitat 1 Oppo BDP-105D HDAnywhere mHub PLUS News, software, opinion, AV rooms and more!

CONTENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE – BUT ONLY FOR THE BETTER

AUDIOVISUAL ONLINE

- Home Cinema
- Hi-Fi
- Speakers
- Brackets
- Accessories
- Cables
- Furniture
- Mounts

BIG SAVINGS
SMALL PRICES

Superb Soundbars

Sterling Speakers

Wireless Wonders

Honorable Headphones

Fantastic 5.1

<p>LOW PRICE NEW</p>  <p>Media M4 Soundbar</p> <p>£399.95</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>Concept 20 Bookshelf Speaker</p> <p>£349.95</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>Airstream A100 Wireless Amplifier</p> <p>£399</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>T51i</p> <p>£90</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>Zensor 1 5.1 Speaker Package</p> <p>From £979</p>
<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>YSP-2500 Digital Soundbar</p> <p>£799</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>2050i Floorstanding Speakers</p> <p>From £459.95</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>Kubik Free Active Wireless Speaker</p> <p>From £295</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>SR325e Prestige Series</p> <p>£299.95</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>HTS 101 5.1 Speaker System</p> <p>£349</p>
<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>DM75 Soundbase w/ Bluetooth</p> <p>£449</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>Diamond 220</p> <p>£199</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>Wireless DAB+ Stereo System</p> <p>£329</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>Radius R90HT1 5.1 Speaker Package</p> <p>£1499</p>	

High End Hi-Fi

Digital Delights

<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>PM6005 Stereo Amplifier w/ DAC</p> <p>£299</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>Caspian M2 Integrated Amp</p> <p>£1900</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>MiniBlink</p> <p>£229</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>M-DAC Digital To Analogue Converter</p> <p>£599</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>DragonFly v1.2 USB Digital Audio Converter</p> <p>£129</p>
<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>CD6005 CD Player</p> <p>£279</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>FMJ A19 Stereo Integrated Amp</p> <p>£649</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>irDac Digital To Analogue Converter</p> <p>£400</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>Hugo DAC / Headphone Amp</p> <p>£1400</p>	









Awesome AV Receivers

Essential Cinema

Top Turntables

Quality Q Acoustics

Excellent Accessories

<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>RX-V377 5.1 Channel AV Receiver</p> <p>Call</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>EH-TW7200 Full HD 3D Projector</p> <p>£1899</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>Concept Turntable with Moving Coil</p> <p>£1395</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>2000i Series 5.1 Cinema Pack</p> <p>From £649.95</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>Evoque Eco Bamboo Stand</p> <p>From £382.99</p>
<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>SC-LX58</p> <p>£1399</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>VPL-HW55ES Full HD 3D Projector</p> <p>£2798</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>Essential 2 Turntable</p> <p>From £209</p>	<p>LOW PRICE ON DEMO</p>  <p>7000i 5.1 Speaker Package</p> <p>£899.95</p>	<p>LOW PRICE</p>  <p>X-Tube XT-40 Speaker Cable</p> <p>£10 per m</p>

0% Finance available

From £300, terms apply.

AV Distribution acts as a credit intermediary and only offers credit products for Pay4Later Ltd via secure trust bank plc. Credit provided subject to age and status.



Representative example

Purchase price	£1499	Payment p/m	£56.25
Deposit	£149	Total repayable	£1499
Amount of credit	£1350	Duration	24 Months

Price promise

Prices checked daily.
Seen something online cheaper?





Opening hours

Monday - Friday
9AM - 5PM

Saturday
10AM - 5PM

audiovisualonline.co.uk
01706 878444

♥ NOW MOBILE FRIENDLY



SPITFIRE CINEMA

Big screen thrills in your home

High quality, great value
home theatre products

NEW
RANGE



Fixed, electric, tab
tension, in-ceiling

From £520

92" TO 150"
SCREEN SIZES

Single £849

Double £1599

100% LEATHER, ELECTRIC
RECLINE, GERMAN MECHANISM



Professional Projectors

Lens Shift Projector
EH-TW6600



EPSON £1399



Full HD 3D Projector
VPL-HW40ES



SONY £1849



4K 3D Projector
VPL-VW300ES



SONY £5849



HD 3D Wireless Projector
EH-TW9200W



EPSON £2998



Unbeatable Bundles

LOW
PRICE

Buy products together for a
fantastic deal. Our prices
won't be beaten.



Home Cinema Bundles

UP TO 50% OFF

Traditional Hi-Fi Bundles

UP TO 30% OFF



Mini Systems Bundles

UP TO 50% OFF

Cable workshop

Made to your exact
specification.



Free delivery

To most mainland
UK addresses.



Showroom

Call and arrange a
demo with us.





POINT OF VIEW

Why splash out on a projector, screen and surround speakers when you can hold a tablet to your nose and put on some headphones? **Richard Stevenson** courts controversy

TELEVISION VIEWING RATINGS are tumbling, according to a recent report by Nielsen. The company produces the TV ratings for the US market but says the trend is global. We are simply watching television less than we used to.

I do mean the television itself, however, and not television programmes. The latter are soaring in popularity. You see, the tablet, phablet, smartphone and computer are becoming the default devices on which many watch broadcast and catch-up TV content. That bastion of UK life, 'watching the TV', is becoming 'watching the tablet'.

Is this trend another leap backwards for quality and performance, as many people switch from bigscreen HD entertainment to smallscreen convenience? In sound terms it seems that way initially, but if you're listening on headphones then most of the gadget brands have upped their game in audio performance in the last generation or two.

Perhaps watching TV on a tablet isn't such a retrograde performance step after all. In fact, one could argue that a 10in tablet held at arm's length has the same field of view as a 110in projector screen viewed from the sofa. Hold the tablet closer to your hooter and you effectively get an even bigger viewing effect, as more of your peripheral vision is taken up by the image. Ideal! An aching arm notwithstanding.

Moreover, one sacrifices very little in terms of picture resolution using a smart device in this way. My iPad boasts 2,048 x 1,536 pixels and my LG G3 smartphone tips in with a 'Quad-HD' 2,560 x 1,440 resolution. Compare that to my JVC D-ILA projector, which remains stoically 1,920 x 1,080 and, with a 110in screen, generates individual pixels about the size of Birmingham. Damned if I can see pixels on the iPad or G3 even when held at the end of my nose.

The lack of aerial socket or HDMI input means these devices are not going to pick up broadcast TV in the traditional way. But IP services like the BBC's iPlayer and Sky Go, and products like SlingBox, make that a bit of a moot point. Nor are you limited to watching TV in the living room at your allotted viewing time. Suddenly that spare 20 minutes or so sitting in the corner of the bathroom each day becomes a viable time to catch up on *EastEnders*.

Money in the madness

And just look at the cost difference. While Sony is touting its latest 4K projector at £5,000 and 84in UHD TVs cost even more, the latest iPad can be yours for under £400. If family members decry your new viewing habits as not sociable, you can afford to buy them all a tablet and still have plenty of change from a 4K PJ budget. Better still, you don't have to watch *Strictly Come Break a Leg* and they don't have to watch *Top Gear* – everyone's a winner.

The next logical step in this evolution is mounting the display device to your head, integrating headphones and using a screen for each eye. That could take up your entire field of view for a fully immersive experience and give you stereoscopic 3D. Devices like the Oculus Rift are not too far away from making that a very real virtual reality. Headset displays have their own challenges of course – it's harder to shovel cinema snacks into your mouth if you can't see what you're doing.

So there you have it. Nielsen produces a report on TV viewing and HCC predicts the future of home cinema is wearing a crash helmet, drinking wine through a straw and picking bits of popcorn out of a bib's spill-pocket. You read it here first ■

Do you watch films and TV on a tablet or smartphone? Let us know: email letters@homecinemachoice.com

Richard Stevenson's ideal programme is a cross between *Strictly Come Dancing* and *Top Gear*, involving pirouetting cars in ra-ra skirts





IN ADMIRATION OF MUSIC

PURE, AUTHENTIC SOUND REPRODUCTION

- delivered by the brand new DALI RUBICON series



Producing a wonderfully wide dynamic range and imaging so real, you'll believe that you are right in the middle of the action.

The RUBICON LCR is a wall-mounted speaker in a class of its own and features DALI's hybrid tweeter module and wood-fibre cones.

The LCR boasts an ingenious bass port configuration built into the back panel that uses the wall to extend its acoustic properties - this delivers an unrivalled bass response and eliminates the need to add a subwoofer to your two-channel system.



For more information on the new RUBICON series: www.dali-rubicon.com

JVC

OUR PROJECTION OF THE FUTURE



4K
e-shift3

Lift your viewing experience to new heights with the latest 2014 range of 3D enabled D-ILA Projectors from JVC.* Featuring an industry leading native contrast ratio of 150,000:1 and a dynamic contrast ratio of 1,500,000:1.**

Not only is the range designed for ultra-high 4K resolution and is 60p ready. It also has the new JVC e-Shift 3 technology, this means it can shift sub-frames to achieve 4 times the pixel density of the original

content, bringing you an even greater level of definition.

Now in it's sixth generation, our D-ILA Projectors have always set new standards. Capable of delivering images of advanced quality with extreme realism and presence in your home cinema environment.

But after all seeing is believing, so to arrange a product demonstration email hdworld@jvc.co.uk
Or for more information visit: www.jvc.co.uk

DLA-X500R has been awarded:



DLA-X700R has been awarded:



* The 2014 range of JVC D-ILA Projectors consists of model numbers DLA-X900R, DLA-X700R, DLA-X500R. Visit www.jvc.co.uk for more details. ** Contrast ratio specifications are for the DLA-X900R. 3840x2160 (4K e-shift3 – not native 4K).

Follow us on  [jvccuk](https://www.facebook.com/jvccuk)  [@jvcuk](https://twitter.com/jvcuk)